LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/modernfanciesfol00popeiala

HILL OF ST MICHEL

MODERN FANCIES AND FOLLIES:

CONSIDERED UPON THE BASIS OF

HUMAN NATURE,

CONTAINING AN EXPOSITION OF THE PRINCIPAL CAUSES WHICH PRODUCE HUMAN SUFFERING AND MISERY, AND PREVENT MAN FROM ATTAINING

TRUE HAPPINESS.

BY LE ROY POPE.

VICE is a monster of such hideous mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

POPE'S ESSAY ON MAN.

PUBLISHED BY MACK R. BARNITZ,
BOOK AND MAP PUBLISHER,
38 AND 40 WEST FOURTH STREET,
CINCINNATI.
1859.

N. B.—Enterprising men wanted everywhere, to circulate this and other works.

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1858, by

LE ROY POPE,

in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of Ohio,

And transferred to Mack R. Barnitz, (as per record in Clerk's office,) the same year, by said Le Roy Pope.

PREFACE.

It is with the greatest solicitude, and with many misgivings, that this volume is submitted to the intelligent public. To arraign before the tribunal of truth and reason those habits and indulgences which society considers as the virtuous employments and enjoyments of life, and there bring against them the charge of error, is a task of the greatest hazard and difficulty. Yet no truth, under any circumstances, should be disagreeable to a rational and moral being, but, on the contrary, it should be our greatest pleasure to search for it wherever it may be found, and to store it in the mind as the most inestimable treasure which man can gain upon earth. It is the only light which can render rationality a blessing, and without which reason acts in utter darkness, and only more rapidly hurries man into suffering and misery.

How supremely important, then, is the truth which immediately relates to man—that truth which is itself the system of principles which governs human nature. It displays the scheme of human happiness, and, consequently, if we would be happy, we must walk in its light, and conform to the conditions which it imposes, otherwise we grope our way in doubt and uncertainty, and become bewil-

dered amid the unyielding and complicated principles of nature; and, instead of attaining true happiness, and beholding the beneficence of God beaming from all his creations, life is too frequently only a succession of sorrows, sufferings, and miseries. Thus man fails to attain true happiness, not because he is not provided with all the means which are essential to its attainment, but because he fails to make a proper use of those means.

The Fancies and Follies of the age, as considered in this volume, are the deviations which man has made, or would make, from truth, in regard to the subjects considered, thus violating the principles of his nature and defeating his own happiness. In considering the question of human nature, all mystic and metaphysical abstractions have been carefully avoided, as having, in all ages, resulted in more abstruse error than they have educed practical truth. I have earnestly sought to divest myself of all prejudice, and all opinions formed upon mere human authority, and to copy what I have written from the great book of nature as it is written by its Omnipotent Author. Whether I have been successful or not, I feel conscious, at least, that I have brought earnestness and sincerity to the task, and the pleasure which I have derived from the investigation of man has amply rewarded my labor.

THE AUTHOR.

FRUITHILL, *March* 1, 1858.

CONTENTS.

ESSAY I.

PAGE.

Woman: Her Rights and Duties Politically considered, ... 7

ESSAY II.

The Undue Influence of Wealth, ... 79

ESSAY III.

The Influence of Novel Reading, ... 172

ESSAY IV.

The Follies of Fashion, ... 222

ESSAY V.

Religious Fancies and Follies, ... 282

ESSAY VI.

Modern Spiritualism. — The Absurdity of its Spirituality exposed, and the Natural Causes which produce the Phenomena explained, . 340

MODERN FANCIES AND FOLLIES.

ESSAY I.

WOMAN: HER RIGHTS AND DUTIES POLITICALLY CONSIDERED.

GRAND and imposing among the fancies and follies of the age, stands that of the Woman's Rights Movement. Its advocates, now appealing directly to the tenderest feeling of our nature, and attempting to awaken those sympathies which are always easily enlisted in behalf of the wronged and oppressed; then summing up the long catalogue of Woman's wrongs, they thunder them in the ears of the "lords of creation," and assert her rights with an earnestness and determination, which almost threaten to move the firm rock of nature. They have discovered that woman is not acting in her proper sphere, that she is oppressed by the yoke of social and political tyranny, and that she is unjustly deprived of rights and privileges which her natural endowments enable her, and entitle her to enjoy. They have made the startling discovery that she is capacitated by nature to enter the arena of life's fiercest struggles in even-handed competition with man; that her natural powers will qualify her to successfully

discharge political rights and duties, and, therefore, the prevailing system of society which is founded upon the supposition, that she is not qualified by nature for these rights, and relieves her from the duty of defending them against aggressors, and places her under the protection of man, thereby does her great wrong.

But it will be said that the Woman's Rights Movement does not aim to establish a perfect equality of rights and duties between man and woman; that it does not advocate that she should defend those rights upon the battle-field, or even that she should engage in the fierce and arduous struggles and employments of peaceful life; but it will be the object of this essay to show that the rights which it does claim for her, necessarily involve all these duties, or they involve the greatest injustice to man; and, further, that the establishment of the principles which it advocates, would not only unsex woman, and degrade her from the only position in which she can exercise a controlling influence over human affairs, but that being contrary to the laws of nature, it must necessarily involve both sexes in the most disastrous consequences. In order that it may not be supposed that we are refuting the visionary theories of irresponsible fanatics and enthusiasts, we propose to found our reflections upon the resolutions thoroughly discussed and adopted by the Annual Woman's Rights Convention, held in the City of New York, on the 22nd and 23rd of Nov. 1856, in the proceedings of which, ladies and gentlemen who occupy the highest social and religious positions participated. They are as follows:

Resolved, That the present uncertain and inconsistent position of woman in our community, not fully

recognized either as a slave or as an equal, taxed, but not represented, authorized to earn property, but not free to control it, allowed to obtain education, but not encouraged to use it, permitted to form political opinions, but not allowed to vote them, all mark a transitional period in human history which can not long endure.

Resolved, That the main power of the Woman's Rights Movement lies in this; that while always demanding for woman, better education, better employment, and better laws, it has always kept steadily in view the one cardinal demand for the right of suffrage, as being, in a democracy, the symbol and the guarantee of all other rights.

Resolved, That the monopoly of the elective franchise, and thereby all the powers of legislative government by man, solely on the ground of sex, is a usurpation, condemned alike by reason and common sense; subversive of all the principles of justice, oppressive and demoralizing in its operations, and insulting to the dignity of human nature.

Resolved, That while the constant progress of laws, education, and industry, prove that our efforts for woman in these respects are not wasted, we yet proclaim ourselves unsatisfied, and are only encouraged to renewed efforts, until the whole be gained.

In one of these resolutions the right of suffrage is distinctly claimed as being the "main power of the Woman's Rights Movement." Now what powers and responsibilities does the right of suffrage confer, and what duties are inseparably connected with its exercise. In a democracy like ours, all the functions, powers and emoluments of government, are placed unreservedly in the hands of those who exercise the elective franchise, and consequently those who are

invested with this right, may change its form, may strengthen or waken its power, or may plunge it into dangers and difficulties from which nothing but the united strength and energy of the nation can extricate it. All political power emanates from the voters, and is delegated by them to their public functionaries, who act under the most sacred trust, and after a brief period, it again recurs to those who gave it. Now it is a political maxim which justice and equality imperatively demand, that those who are thus either directly or indirectly invested with all the powers of government, and upon whose political action its fortunes depend, should also equally discharge the duties of defending it against the dangers which may threaten its destruction.

Now equal rights most certainly incur equal duties, and, therefore, those who can not perform the duties, are not in justice entitled to enjoy the rights. What could be more obviously unjust than to relieve one half of all those who control the government, of all responsibility in regard to its defense? No despotism was ever founded upon more unjust principles. If woman was invested with political rights, and yet relieved from the essential duties which sustain those rights, it is evident that man would be much wronged, for while all the responsibility of defending and sustaining the body politic would fall upon him; it might be plunged into dangers and difficulties which were not the results of his own actions, and which he had no power to prevent. Hence not only justice, but the safety of the government requires, that if woman be invested with equal political rights with man, she must also equally discharge the duties which are created by the exercise of those rights. But no advocate of woman's rights will contend that it is the proper sphere of woman to enter the battle-field in

defense of those institutions which her political conduct might endanger, therefore the supposed reform is founded in injustice and error.

But she is not only incapable of discharging those duties which are created by the exercise of political rights, but she is also incapable of exercising the rights themselves, without robbing her of all the loveliest charms of her nature, and degrading her from the exalted social position which she now occupies. Woman is controlled more by passion and less by reason than man, her average mental and physical powers are inferior to his, and hence she might more readily be made the political tool of designing intriguers. She is more conscientious and confiding than man, and while she was intending to discharge her high trust with the utmost good faith, she might be more easily led to make a most disastrous use of her newly acquired rights. There is no supreme earthly tribunal which has jurisdiction over the conduct of nations, and unfortunately the moral laws, which should be of binding force upon all mankind, do not govern nations in their intercourse with each other, and hence it is, as all history demonstrates, that political rights must be maintained by physical force; but as woman is by nature utterly disqualified to discharge these duties, it follows that if this new reformation were effected, man would invest her with rights which God has denied her the power to maintain.

Now it is obvious that as woman is the weaker vessel, and physically and intellectually inferior to man, that whatever rights and privileges she does enjoy, she must enjoy by the protection of man. This is so completely in accordance with all the designs of nature, and the teachings of all religion, that it certainly is unnecessary to offer argument to sustain

it, and hence it follows that, whenever she forfeits the protection of man, by becoming politically his equal, she not only places in the greatest jeopardy those political rights, but also those social privileges and enjoyments which now constitute her the supreme ruler of all the purest affections of the human heart, and enlist in her behalf the noblest emotions of man's nature. He now feels that she is a sacred charge intrusted to his protection, and hence he devotes his life to her enjoyment, sheds his blood in her defense, and concedes to her a social position far above himself. He manfully meets the severest struggles and hardships of life to lay before her every comfort and enjoyment; or, when his country calls him to her defense, there is nothing which nerves his arm with so strong a power, or infuses into his soul the fire of courage and patriotism, as the thoughts of that affectionate and confiding wife, and those beloved children, who are clustering around the hearthstone of his home. But as soon as she is invested with the political rights demanded in these resolutions, she becomes politically equal with man; and, as the idea of one equal being placed under the protection of another equal, is utterly absurd, she thereby forfeits the protection of man; and, as it is an established fact that her mental and physical inferiority will prevent her from enjoying any rights and privileges, except by the protection of man, she would soon not only be deprived of her political rights, but she would also be degraded from the exalted position which she now occupies.

But further, in this age of bitter political strife, so prolific of political parties, were woman invested with the rights demanded, it would most probably divide the opposite sexes into antagonistic political parties. New interests would unavoidably arise upon the introduction of a new power of such

controlling influence, and they would be interests such as have never yet agitated any government; interests which result from the distinctions of sex—the opposite sexes being engaged in the bitterest political contention, each striving to enlarge its own rights, and to trample upon those of the other, and each resorting to all the intrigues known to political baseness and corruption, to gain the preponderance of power, until the fabric of government should reel and totter upon its basis, amid the violent political concussion.

Oh, what a lovely employment for woman! How it would exalt the purity of her nature, and increase the charms of her loveliness! And how it would purify that native goodness and affection which is the spontaneous outgushing of every true woman's heart! And what a lovely and fascinating being she would be, as she emerged from the angry current of political strife, all reeking with political corruption and nastiness! And still further, woman being the weaker vessel, must, necessarily, be unsuccessful in her effort to gain political power, and the result would appear inevitable, that she must be hurled from the proud position which she now occupies in the temple of civilization, and be again plunged into that deep degradation and misery, in which she has toiled during so many ages of her existence.

We have said that woman was physically and mentally inferior to man. We shall not enter into any lengthened argument to establish the fact, for its truth can not be so incontrovertibly established by human reasoning, as it is by the arguments of Nature, which are reiterated by every day's experience. We must not be understood to be speaking in disparagement of female character, for woman has many beautiful and lovely traits of character which man is incapa-

ble of attaining; but these lovely gems can never be displayed in her character as a politician, and we are now considering her in that capacity. We shall be pleased to dwell upon these beauties hereafter. It is true that some female names stand high in the list of our best authors and greatest rulers, and the advocates of woman's rights displaying these great names and deeds before us, triumphantly ask if woman may not be a stateswoman and a politician? Now as these resolutions do not demand the right of suffrage for individuals, but for the whole sex, we shall not stop to consider the capacities of individuals.

It is true that the names of De Staël and Madame Roland, of Catharine of Russia and Maria Theresa shine forth with a dazzling brightness among the great characters which have ennobled human nature; but these appear along the course of receding time only an occasional star, which shines thus brightly above the great level of humanity, while in every age of the world the opposite sex has produced numerous intellectual giants who have controlled contemporary events and shaped the destinies of succeeding generations. Nor will it answer to urge that her intellectual faculties have been fettered by laws or custom, for the world of letters has always been freely opened to her, and the shelves of our bookstores and libraries are now filled with love-sick novels, which are the results of her intellectual efforts.

But it may be said that she has been prevented from engaging in the study and practice of the professions and those employments of life which develop the intellectual faculties. How? By laws? No. By custom? If so it was of her own formation. Yet it is true she has been prevented. By whom? By the God of nature. She has a natural and unsur-

mountable hatred for the abstruse principles and dry technicalities of professional study, and even when she masters these, her physical powers will not enable her to successfully discharge their arduous duties. When she thus attempts to discharge those duties of life which require the energies of a sterner nature, she is removed from her proper sphere of action, and is thus deprived of all those sweet charms of her nature, that heavenly affection and those pure emotions which seem to elevate her above the sphere of man, and she seems a lovely being, forming a connecting link between fallen humanity and angelic loveliness.

Her nature is not formed of such stern and substantial materials as man's, but more lovely and heavenly; and she is no more his equal in the stern and rugged struggles of professional and business life, than he is her equal in the purer and nobler offices of kindness and love. The poet has very truly said,

"Women are soft, mild, pitiful, and flexible,
Thou—stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless."

SHAKSPEARE.

God has placed his emphatic No upon all combinations or changes of these great destructive natural qualities which are peculiar to each sex; and all the woman's rights advocates and conventions, and all the human laws which could be enacted between now and the day of judgment, could not alter them in the least, or make woman a successful politician, and yet be a true woman; or give man the attractive grace and milder and purer passions of woman, and yet be a true man. Man might as well enact that the earth shall stand firm, and the sun and planets revolve around it, as to enact that woman shall be equal to man, or man equal to woman, or that either shall

perform the duties which the scheme of Nature requires shall be performed only by the other; for one natural law can be repealed or amended by human legislation just as easily as another. Milton has said,

> "For contemplation he and valor formed,
> For softness she and sweet attractive grace,
> He for God only, she for God and him."

It is thus obvious that the very nature of woman forms an impassable barrier to the successful exercise of the rights and proper discharge of the duties of political life. She is both mentally and physically incapable of enjoying these rights and privileges. She would thus forfeit and disclaim the protection of man; and, being inferior to him in all those natural endowments which are essential to success, she would thus engage in an even-handed contest with him in all the fiercest and most embittered struggles of life. It would be inevitable that she would not only fail to maintain her political equality, but also that the very efforts which she must necessarily make, would blight all the fairest charms and beauties of her nature, and transform her from a guardian angel, administering the kind offices of devoted love and affection, into a wrangling politician, enforcing her arguments with a broomstick.

The most lovely beauty which civilization has impressed upon the features of humanity, the brightest radiance which the star of human progress has ever shed upon the actions of men, is unquestionably the elevation of woman to her present position in society. Who can contemplate the condition of woman during the dark ages of human existence, without feelings of mingled sympathy and indignation? Bound down by the fetters of an abject slavery, and toiling at those pursuits which are most uncongenial to her na-

ture, she was cold-hearted, revengeful and degraded; without those pure emotions, chastened passions, and lovely virtues, which ennoble the truly accomplished woman. Long and deeply did she suffer, as through all the ages of her oppression, generation succeeded generation, only to suffer the wrongs and indignities, which had been suffered by its predecessor, until the burning light of civilization dissolved the fetters of her thralldom, and she appeared in the lovely light of her exalted nature, and by the power of her very gentleness and love, holds in check the more fierce and wayward passions of man's nature.

How powerful and holy is the influence of the true woman. Always pleading the cause of virtue, she strews its path with the sweetest charms of her nature, and as those over whom heaven has appointed her to rule by the power of love, gradually relieve themselves of her gentle influence, as they depart farther into the ways of transgression, her energies are strengthened, and she more devotedly labors to reclaim them from the doom of vice and misery. And when the stern nature of man faints despondingly under the heavy strokes of adversity, or his stawlwart frame lies prostrate and helpless under the influence of disease, then the divinest qualities of female nature shine forth in their loveliest light, brightening as the gloom thickens, and like some ministering angel, she watches around the couch of pain, ever happy when she can relieve the patient sufferer or the heavy heart, by the free offerings of purest kindness and affection, and when the shades of death are gathering around the frail sufferer, and the fading eye yet lingers upon the receding shores of time, O, in such an hour it is heaven's sweetest and dearest privilege to dying humanity, to be surrounded by mother, wife, and sisters, that the last

earthly thought may dwell upon heaven's purest offering, and as the faltering lips are growing chilly in the cold grasp of death, to receive the burning kiss of a devoted affection, over which death holds no dominion, and as the soul takes its eternal flight from its earthly tenement, it receives the parting endearments of woman's truest love, and while they are yet still lingering upon the soul, it enters its eternal abode:

> "O, fairest of creation, last and best
> Of all God's works, creature in whom excelled
> Whatever can to sight or thought be formed,
> Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet." MILTON.

Such is the divine mission of woman, such is the loveliness of her unperverted nature, when she moves in her proper sphere of action, and thus properly exercises all the lovely qualities with which her Creator has endowed her. But when she deviates from this sphere, and would act in one for which she is not qualified by nature, she would thereby defeat the scheme of her happy existence, and suffer the penalties of her violated nature. And how often is the beautiful picture of true female character marred and stained by the popular fancies and follies of the day; and while many would seem to be true women, the polished surface and bewitching exterior only conceal a selfish and deceitful heart.

But behold woman in her present civilized condition, the petted favorite of modern society, enjoying the best comforts and choicest luxuries of life, and placed far above the anxious cares and exhausting struggles which beset its more rugged walks, exempted from its most stern and laborious duties, and occupying the reserved and privileged seats in the great temple of human society. Would you still farther elevate her condition, by conferring upon her

additional rights and privileges? Beware: if the exercise of these rights, and privileges are uncongenial to her nature, you necessarily endanger all the blessings and privileges which she now enjoys. God knows, we would aid, with whatever power we possess, any reform which could elevate and purify female character; for the condition of the human race is always determined by the position which woman occupies in society, and for the same reason, we will oppose to the utmost, any movement which may threaten to destroy her present influence.

It is true that woman suffers many hardships. She is frequently treated as she ought not to be. But is not this the common lot of mankind? Do they expect to relieve her of all the trials and troubles of life; and that she shall never suffer a wrong at the hands of her fellow-beings? Do they expect to exempt her from the inexorable condition of her earthly existence? Does not man, with all his usurped rights, suffer frequent hardships and great wrongs at the hands of his fellow-man? Is not woman herself some times in fault? Ah, a reformation is much needed here, but it can not be effected by laws enacted by the legislature and recorded in the statute book, but only by correct principles impressed upon the mind and registered in the human heart, so that each individual may at all times turn to that faithful repository, and there read the golden rules which are to govern him in all his transactions with his fellow beings.

Woman, therefore, while she retains the frailties and imperfections of human nature, can not be entirely relieved from individual instances of wrong and oppression; but it can not be successfully denied that she now occupies the most elevated position in civilized society. Indeed, she is made too much a

toy; the mere ornament of society, instead of its useful and efficient aid. Man worships at the shrine of woman; in all his deportments he studies to please her; and it would seem as though his only aim were to smooth down the rough places in the rugged journey of life, so that the fragile and gentle being committed to his charge may pass down the turbulent stream of time uninjured by its dangers, and undisturbed by its fierce contentions. He meets the cares and troubles of life with a manly pride, and perseveringly encounters all its labors and drudgeries, in order that he may offer the reward of his toil to gratify her every wish, and even her vanities and follies. He only asks in return the kind offerings of her confiding love.

While woman is thus securely and happily enthroned in her kingdom of love, enjoying the rarest benefits of civilized society, and safely reposing under the protection of man, with all the noblest emotions of his nature enlisted in her behalf, what evil spirit can have again whispered in her ear to tempt her to forsake the sphere of her proper duty, to enter the political arena amid scenes of strife and bitter contention, where her feeble powers can give her no hope of success, and which must inevitably deprive her of all the sweetest charms of her nature? The argument may be recapitulated thus: that woman now occupies the highest social position in civilized society; that she is not mentally or physically capable of sustaining herself there, and must, therefore, be sustained in her present position by the protection of man; that by being invested with equal rights she assumes equal duties, and becomes his political equal; that by becoming his equal she forfeits and renounces his protection, and, therefore, must not only fail to sustain her political equality,

but must also be degraded from her present social position.

A pure and noble patriotism is that of woman, but it is not that patriotism which displays its valorous deeds upon the field of battle, nor expels the invading foe; but it is that pure and devoted patriotism which infuses itself into the sterner and fiercer nature of man. It is that patriotism which sparkles around the fireside, and impresses a noble courage and a true love of country upon the budding mind of the youthful hero; and, in after years, it weighs powerfully in the scale which is to decide the fate of her country—for when the patriot son meets the ruthless foe upon the bloody field, and there performs deeds of valor which secure his country's liberty, it is only the matured fruits of that devoted patriotism which was implanted and nurtured in the mind of the son by the patriot mother.

Hers is that patriotism, which, like the Spartan mother, can urge her son to "return with or upon his shield;" it is that gentle influence which invested the patriotism of man with all its nobleness, and without which it would degrade itself into mere bullyism; for the only principle which can divest war of its horrid crimes and justify human carnage, is the defense of a beloved home and its cherished inmates—and what can so effectually arouse to action all the noblest energies of our nature as the thoughts of that confiding wife and those cherub children, who are clustering round its fireside, the dearest of all earthly loves and treasures, who are relying with devoted helplessness upon the efforts of their only earthly protector? O, how the thoughts of these distant loved ones nerves the arm and inspires the

soul, until all the frailties and baseness of human nature are consumed in the burning blaze of patriotism; until man, like the fabled gods of old, plunges into the fiery arena of the fiercest struggle, and moves with majestic grandeur, amid the devouring elements of the battle-field.

We have said that the exercise of political rights would rob woman of the sweetest charms of her nature. Let us see how and why. As woman in her proper sphere is superior to man in all those purer and more lovely emotions of human nature, so every day's observation teaches us that when once she is floating in the current of degrading vice, she recklessly loosens all her holds upon the solid fastening of virtue and morality, and becomes lost to every feeling and passion which can ennoble human nature, and sinks deeper into the depths of misery and degradation than the opposite sex ever reaches. Thus she is capable of rising higher and sinking lower, in the scale of being, than man. This is because her intellectual endowments are inferior to those of man, while her passions are stronger than his. Thus she has stronger passions, with less reason and judgment to control them.

She is a creature of passion. It is her nature. Her soul is enraptured by passion, and yielding to its impulses, she floats through life upon its current. Hence it is that the passion of love is much stronger in woman than in man. It is her nature to love. When her affections are once thoroughly enlisted, she surrenders unconditionally to the impulses of her passion, and all the thoughts and hopes of life are centered upon the object of her love, to whom she is attached by the strongest and most enduring ties of her nature. And when death rudely enters this fairy-like scene of earthly happiness, and snatches away

the object of all her earthly affections, often the disappointed passion consumes the energies of life, the bewitching smile no longer plays amid the dimpled beauties, the joyous laugh is hushed into the melancholy sigh. Man does not yield thus to the more delicate passions of his nature. His nature is too stern. He loves devotedly, but not with his whole soul.

Hence it is that when the passions of woman are chastened by virtue, when only the purest and most exalted of her nature are enlisted, that she almost seems to move in a sphere above that of fallen humanity, and the spirit of loveliness beams forth in purity and beauty in all her ways, and she thus becomes the "fairest of creation." But if, on the contrary, instead of those passions which elevate her nature, only those which degrade it are enlisted, if she is thus swept along in the downward current of vice, if her passions are thus perverted amid scenes of dissipation and wrong, they fasten themselves into her very nature with a fatal firmness, and drag her down to the lowest state of misery and woe.

If we take the retrospect of human history, and look around upon the nations, we shall find that the position which woman occupies in society is the true exponent of a nation's civilization and prosperity, and hence it is obvious that there can be nothing of more vital importance to the welfare and happiness of humanity, than that all the most virtuous and lovely passions of her nature should be enlisted, that she should be carefully sustained in that sphere of action which is most congenial to her nature, and that female character should be religiously protected as the firm fastening, and great bulwark of public and private virtue and morality. While we keep these principles steadily in view, let us seriously

aim to ascertain the real influence which the exercise of political rights would have upon female character.

Of all the duties which are devolved upon man by his earthly situation, none, nor even all others, so effectually arouse into action all the fiercest passions of human nature, as the bitter strife and contention, which, in the present state of man's moral development, seems to be inseparably connected with the exercise of political rights. Political ambition, when it obtains possession of the mind, is the strongest passion of human nature. None so humble, none so devoid of the earthly vanities, as to be indifferent to the glitter of political glory and power. It is a passion implanted by the master hand of heaven in the mind of every compos mentis member of the human race. With whatever affected contempt, or however indifferent some persons may appear to its promptings, yet the passion dwells within them, and although it may not burst forth amid the lurid glare of war, or the thunders of artillery and the clangor of arms may not be its sweetest music, or it may not receive its gratification from the pomp and pride of office, yet the desire to reach honorable position, and to achieve earthly power and glory, is the mainspring of human action, and heaves its emotions in every breast.

Being thus the most universal, and at the same time the strongest passion of human nature, it very naturally results that its perversion has been the great moving power which has caused the greatest commotions and the fiercest struggles which have ever convulsed society. It has caused desolations without number, oppressions and outrages without limit, and injustice and cruelties of the most heartless character. It has swept nations from independent existence, and sought its unholy gratification

amid the smoke of burning cities, and the flow of human blood. And although the political contests which agitate nations in times of peace are less fierce and bloody, yet they are invariably more corrupt and dishonest, and it is but too true that most of the intrigues and artifices resorted to, in order to obtain political power and glory, are too frequently devoid of every principle of true patriotism and honor. In the present state of the human race, all these dangers and evils unavoidably attend the exercise of political rights. Were all mankind virtuous, then the exercise of these rights would not contaminate the purest mind, but until such is the case, political contentions will always engender the fiercest and most dangerous passions of human nature.

If man, with his sterner nature, and stronger powers of reason and judgment, has had his rationality shipwrecked in every age of his existence, by the surging waves of these perverted passions, how can it be expected that woman, the "weaker vessel," can be sent adrift upon them, and still retain the purity and integrity of her nature? Is it not enough that the male sex should be submitted to the frenzy and corruption of political strife? God has created man, male and female, and endowed him by nature for the discharge of the sterner duties of life, and her for those which are more delicate, and He has so placed the scheme of human happiness upon this foundation, that neither sex can be removed from its natural sphere of action, without involving the race in the most ruinous consequences. Therefore, as the exercise of political rights would most clearly remove woman from her natural sphere of action, let all who love woman in the exalted purity and integrity of her nature, earnestly protest, in the name of heaven, against this desecration of her character.

Let it not be said that woman may be thus removed from her proper sphere of action, and yet preserve the purity and integrity of her nature. Have not those women who have been elevated to high political power generally been devoid of all those sympathies and feelings which should characterize the true woman? Have not women crowded round the guillotine to gloat on the blood of innocent victims? Alison, speaking of the thirst for blood, which prevailed in France after the restoration of Louis XVIII, says, "The rank, talent, and consideration, even the sex of many who were loudest in the outcry, added to the difficulty of restraining it, for experience then again illustrated the truth proved by so many passages in history, that when the passions are violently excited, it is in the softer sex that they appear with the most violence." "Women," says Lamartine, "of the highest rank were implacable in their demand for blood. It would seem that generosity is the companion of force, and that the weaker the sex is, the more is it pitiless. History is bound to say so in order to stigmatize it. Neither high birth, nor great fortunes, nor literary education preserved, in that crisis, more than it had done in many others, ladies of the aristocracy of Paris, and of the court, for the thirst for vengeance, and the sanguinary joys, which had actuated women of the most abject condition, under the Reign of Terror, and at the gates of the Revolutionary tribunal." Says Virgil,

"Gnarus furens quid femina possit."

Again, Alison, speaking of the French Chamber of Representatives, says: "One universal feeling of indignation pervaded this body, and, in the vehement passions with which it was animated, the women of

the highest rank connected with the members, stood preëminent and strongly excited all the men with whom they were connected, or whom they could influence. The human heart is the same at all times, and in all grades of society, and the same principle which causes two-thirds of the crowd at every public execution to be composed of the humbler part of the softer sex, now rendered many of the highest, foremost in the demands for the scaffolds which were to cover France with mourning." So says history.

Let it not then be said that the gentle and exalted nature of woman would assuage the fierceness and purify political contention, but on the contrary, political contention would corrupt the purity of her nature and degrade her character to its own level. For as the exercise of political rights in the present condition of mankind is, unavoidably, more or less associated with impure motives, and frequently arouses into action the fiercest passions of our nature, and, as woman is more controlled by her passions and less by her reason and judgment, than man; it is obvious that this sphere of action would deprive her of all those gentle charms and lovely passions which exalt her nature, and engender those fierce and perverted passions which degrade it. For the same reason she would more easily become the victim of political baseness and dishonesty.

Thus woman would become the swaggering, blustering fireside soldier, more dangerous with the broomstick than the bayonet, and politics would no longer confine its commotions and brawlings to the street and bar-room, but would pollute by its unholy wrangling and falsehood the holy influence which should pervade the family circle. It is a conceded point that talking is a distinctive characteristic of woman, and for this reason she would

make the noisiest politician that ever cursed any country, and, hence, there would arise from the political squabble, such a wrangling and jabber as has not been heard since the confusion of languages, upon the Tower of Babel. These advocates of woman's rights are engaged in the construction of a political Tower of Babel, which is just as practicable as the famous Tower upon the plains of Shinar, and consequently will meet with precisely the same success.

We may again recapitulate thus—that woman is more controlled by passion and less by intellect than man—that she can only retain the purity and integrity of her nature by enlisting her most gentle and lovely passions—that in the present condition of man, dishonest artifices, corrupting influences, and fierce and angry strife and contention are unavoidable in the exercise of political rights, and, therefore, the exercise of political rights is uncongenial to the nature of woman, and would remove her from her natural sphere of action, and, consequently, inevitably degrade her character.

If a nation's prosperity and happiness are determined by the condition of woman, what a gloomy prospect for the cause of humanity would be presented by submitting her nature to all the perverting and uncongenial influences which are the necessary concomitants to the exercise of political privilege. The protection of woman's rights is the first and grandest object of civilization, and no civilization can promote the true welfare of humanity unless it elevates woman to the highest position in society, and carefully sustains her in that sphere of action which only enlists the ennobling and redeeming charms of her nature. What would man be if his native fierceness and sternness were unchecked by

the softening and reclaiming influence of woman's higher nature. The answer is contained in the historic records of barbarism. Woman, acting in her proper sphere, and with all the ennobling emotions of her nature exercising their reclaiming power, is the genius which ever presides over the advancing destinies of mankind, and which incites to the noblest and loveliest deeds of humanity, and she always adorns with the purest and loveliest beauties of her nature, the path which leads to happiness and to heaven.

The Author of nature has provided no other earthly agent to perform this high duty, and whenever woman fails to perform the work assigned her by her Creator, true civilization is unattainable. The reclaiming influence of woman is the centripetal force of human nature which binds mankind together by the ties of love and friendship, and it is the only influence which can counteract the centrifugal force of perverted human nature, and which would otherwise give man a tendency to fly off into a state of ferocious barbarism. The earth could as well perform its revolutions, after gravitation had ceased to be a natural law, as man could be truly happy after woman has ceased to fulfill the essential agency in the great scheme of human nature which God has required her to perform. The earth is not truer to the laws of nature than is man.

As the true progress and happiness of the human race depends so entirely upon woman acting in the sphere which nature has assigned her, what can be of more vital importance to mankind generally, and woman particularly, than that every avenue which can admit a corrupting influence should be safely guarded, and that she should be scrupulously protected against every practice which is uncongenial

to her nature or can degrade her character, and that all the purest and noblest emotions of her soul should be enlisted in the discharge of her duty, while every patriot and philanthropist should resist with unyielding determination every innovation which can even remotely place her unsullied character and true position in society in jeopardy.

If woman is not the messenger of gentleness and affection upon earth, she is without a mission here; a designless, helpless, impotent being, most vitally affected by all human affairs, but over which she can have no control. Then is religion a farce, the Author of nature a capricious and unreasonable being, and all his glorious works without beneficent design. But let every human being be thankful that the Creator has endowed woman with those natural attributes, which, when properly exerted, exercise a purifying and reclaiming influence upon human affairs, and continually urge man to achieve a higher and a nobler destiny. Let all who would rejoice in human welfare feel sincerely grateful for all these blessings, and earnestly oppose man when he would defeat his own happiness by perverting the beneficent designs of his Creator.

But it is urged in the resolutions, as a ground of complaint, that woman is "taxed but not represented." It is a fundamental principle of political justice that the necessary expense of sustaining the government should be borne by all the property-holders in proportion to the taxable property held by each. Now, it is perfectly obvious that where this principle of taxation is complied with, no distinct class of the community can be wronged or unjustly oppressed. The oppression of taxation

without representation results where a separate class or people is taxed as a distinct body, and yet has no voice in the power which taxes them. Thus the British government claimed the right to tax the American colonies at pleasure, while the colonies had no voice whatever in the Parliament which taxed them, and it is evident to every person that had the colonies yielded to this unjust claim they would have been much wronged and greatly oppressed. In this instance the British government formed tax laws which did not extend to all the property in the British kingdoms, but applied only to the property in the American colonies, and hence the wrong; but surely no person will assert that while the tax law extends equally to all the property which is placed under the protection of government, and taxes specially no distinct class of persons, that any person or class of persons can possibly be wronged or oppressed.

Now, who ever heard of a tax law that taxed the property of women as such, and did not at the same time equally tax the property of men? Who ever heard of a legislature that legislated against woman as a distinct class, and subjected her to burdens for the purpose of sustaining the government from which the other sex was relieved. No such law has ever been enacted where woman has enjoyed the protection of civilized man, but it will not be safe to say what may be enacted when she renounces that protection. But as long as any tax law applies equally to the property of those who enact it, and to the property of those who have no voice in its enactment, self-interest alone will prevent it from being made unnecessarily burdensome. And so long as it does apply equally to all the property, to whomsoever belonging, which is placed under the protection

of government, one class can not be oppressed more than an other, and as no law makes unjust discrimination between the property of men and women as such, it follows conclusively that no wrong or oppression can result to woman from this mode of taxation, which does not also result to man. And, therefore, she suffers no injustice in this respect.

But let us scrutinize a little more closely the principles involved in this demand. It assumes that taxation should regulate representation, that is, that all who pay taxes should be represented in the law-making power. Now, if taxation is the true basis upon which representation should be placed, it follows that the amount of representation should be regulated by the amount of taxation, and, therefore, in choosing representatives in the law-making power, the number of votes which each citizen should be entitled to cast, should be determined by the amount of his property, that is, that the citizens who have wealth should have a number of votes, but the humbler classes, whose honest efforts produce the wealth, should not be allowed to vote at all. We have instances in Europe, of governments founded upon this basis. A few individuals soon monopolize the wealth and the law-making power, and the mass of the people are downtrodden and oppressed, without property and without rights.

Let those who advocate this movement, look across the Atlantic, and see the perfect consummation of their favorite reform. But if political justice requires that woman must be represented, because she is taxed, it also requires that children to whom belong taxable property must be represented, and citizens of other countries who own property in this, must be represented, and negroes and every other tribe of the genus homo, who can acquire property, must be repre-

sented, and thus the whole thing resolves itself into a ridiculous absurdity.

But as another ground of complaint it is urged that woman is "authorized to earn property, but not free to control it." In forming laws for the regulation of large communities, it becomes necessary to establish general principles, which will be equally applicable to all similar cases, and it is also essential to an effective political organization, that individuals should relinquish many minor rights, in order that the more important rights may be securely protected. Thus it is impossible to establish civil liberty, unless each member of the community surrenders such a part of his natural liberty, as is necessary to secure the protection of civil government, but the advantages thus derived are admitted by all, to be infinitely greater than those which man could enjoy by remaining in a state of natural independence.

But in order to secure the inestimable blessings of civil government, by which woman is much the greatest gainer, it devolved upon man to surrender a larger portion of natural rights than woman, for, in a state of uncultivated nature, might determines right; and, therefore, she had very few natural rights to surrender. Now tyranny or oppression is defined to be "a restraint of natural liberty not necessary or expedient for the public." But woman complains that she is oppressed by civil government. How? Why, the resolution says that she is "authorized to earn property but not free to control it." But this can not be one of her natural rights which is thus unnecessarily restrained, for in a state of nature, as already said, might determines right, and there she certainly could not be very free to control her property.

But let us see what real wrong is done her in regard to the control of property. Every woman, so long as she remains unmarried, is just as free to control her property as any man; it is, therefore, against the marital rights that this complaint is directed. These rights in all the states except one, are founded upon the English Common-law. It is true that there have been many statutary provisions made in the different states, but they all look to the common law as the source of marital rights. This law regards husband and wife as one person, and by its provisions, the act of marriage, when there is no arrangement between the parties to prevent it, transfers the property of the wife to the husband, upon his complying with certain conditions which is not necessary here to explain. Upon the part of the husband, it requires that he shall provide for the wife all the necessaries and comforts of life in proportion to the amount of his property. The question is, whether woman is wronged or oppressed by this arrangement.

The common law is the experience and wisdom of eight hundred years reduced to practice; and hence the policy which regards husband and wife as one person, is a maxim of justice, derived from long and extensive experience in human affairs, and founded in the teachings of ages. Let us look at its practical wisdom. Amid the strife and contentions which attend the transactions of civilized society, in which almost every person is engaged in the exclusive pursuit of wealth, and so regardless of the means by which it is acquired; it is of the utmost importance to society, that all the ways and means which can place the practice of fraud and dishonesty beyond the reach of legal justice, should be strictly prevented. Now if the husband and wife be allowed to hold separate property in the manner demanded in these

resolutions, and the property of the one be not subject to the just demands against the other, it is evident that there would be thus formed a hiding-place for fraud and dishonesty, in which they could so effectually conceal themselves, that they would be beyond the reach of judicial scrutiny. This is exemplified in those states in which innovation has been made in the common law in this particular, for there the most stupendous frauds have been practiced, and their perpetrators have successfully defied the efforts of legal justice. It will be presently shown that woman is now permitted to hold and control separate property for all honest purposes, by complying with the easy conditions of the law, and certainly it will not be claimed as one of woman's rights, that she shall be allowed to practice fraud with impunity.

If the wife is to be invested with the free control of property, equally with the husband, it is obvious that the greatest opportunity will be offered for the practice of fraud, for they would really be associated in a business partnership; but relieved from its responsibilities, for the contract of the one would not bind the other, and thus there would be opened a very tempting way to avoid the payment of honest debts. It is true that all fraudulent transfers would be vitiated by the fraud, but how is the fraud to be detected? By swearing husband and wife? The remedy is worse than the disease. The common law has always, for the soundest reasons, regarded husband and wife as incompetent evidence in any case in which either was interested. The matrimonial attachment is much stronger than the obligations of an oath, and, consequently, this would lead to evils much more to be dreaded than fraud. Nature, religion, and law forbid it, and no human power can annul their united decree.

It is not pretended that woman has any peculiar inclination to the practice of fraud or dishonesty, but all experience, from the time that Eve ate of the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden, until the present time, proves that it is especially dangerous to submit her to temptation. When acting in her proper sphere she rises above it; but when removed from that sphere, she is capable of the basest dishonesty and degradation.

But there is another result which must be considered here. The free control of property would as clearly remove her from the sphere in which nature has qualified her to act, as would the exercise of political rights, and for nearly the same reasons. If the fierce struggles and contentions which attend the exercise of political rights are uncongenial to her nature, are those any less so, which unavoidably attend the free control of property, in this money-seeking age, when the accumulation of wealth is the grand object of life, and its crushing influence has corrupted the most sterling principles of virtue and integrity, and even prostituted religion itself? Would you plunge her into the desperate whirl of commercial struggle, at a time when even the sterner nature of man is yielding to its fierceness and uncharitableness? Ah, her nature could not retain its gentleness and loveliness amid such rugged surges. She is physically and intellectually incapable of successfully discharging these sterner duties. When she occupies her proper position in society, the gentleness and purity of her nature can temper the fierceness and sternness of man, and direct his course in life into the path of virtue; but, notwithstanding all this, she would make but an indifferent notion-peddler or horse-jockey. Why, if, she is not fortunate enough

to be husbanded herself, she has to employ a man to husband her property.

It is true that the property which should be religiously reserved for the sustenance of the wife and children, is frequently squandered by a dissipated and vagrant husband. But, because there are a few individual instances of this kind, does it prove the falseness of the experience of eight centuries, and call for a general warfare with the principles of nature? Does woman expect to be relieved from all liability of hardships while she remains a human being? But are not these wrongs to be righted by a moral reformation, rather than by a political reformation, which invests woman with uncongenial rights? And does man suffer no hardships at the hands of woman, which call for reform? Does not the husband frequently devote his life to drudgery and servitude in order to sustain the wife in fashionable folly and vicious idleness? Who is the oppressor then? There is more truth than poetry in the saying: "when a man resolves to become rich, let him first ask his wife." But the simple truth is, that in order to be happy, both husband and wife must faithfully discharge their respective duties. Woman must not suppose that she can relieve herself from the unrighteous wrongs and oppressions which are inflicted upon her by the "sovereign lord," by transforming herself into a man, or that she can successfully discharge masculine duties, until she does this. "What God has joined together let not man put asunder," neither by conduct upon his own part, nor by investing woman with uncongenial rights, least while in the pursuit of chimeras and utopian theories, the substantial happiness, which is the reward of true domestic virtue, be lost for ever.

Now if a community of interests between husband and wife is essential to domestic happiness, and woman is the "weaker vessel," as God has declared her to be by his word and his works; the control of the common property is a duty devolved upon man by unavoidable necessity, and, therefore, if there is any wrong or oppression about it, it is not inflicted upon her by man, but by her Creator. But let us make another sincere effort to discover the nature of these wrongs and oppressions, which, like ghosts and rapping spirits, are for ever eluding our grasp. Let us see if woman is not allowed the free control of property in all cases in which justice and the true interest of humanity demand it.

It is a fact remarked by a distinguished author, that wherever the common law has prevailed, there have the character and rights of woman been most securely protected; there has she been elevated to the highest social position, and her influence most widely and beneficially exerted. But there is an institution of which woman is the especial favorite; which always accompanies the common law. We refer to the Court of Equity. It is the consort of the common law, performing the same part in jurisprudence, which the true wife performs in the scheme of human happiness. It softens the sternness of law, and administers relief where justice and humanity would be outraged. This court permits a settlement to be made upon the wife, which it will protect against all demands, except such as result from her proper acts. Not only is she free to control this property, but the contracts of the husband can not bind it, nor can he obtain possession of it except by her free consent, and not only this, but the court is her guardian, and frequently protects her against the effects of her own rash acts. All it requires is,

that the settlement shall be supported by a sufficient consideration, and so published to the world, that it shall not deceive persons who are strangers to the agreement, or open the door to fraud.

What more does justice require? What more does woman want? If she is unwilling to trust man with her property, when she intrusts him with her hand and heart, why does not she demand that a settlement shall be made in her favor, to secure her against all emergencies, and not be resolving about her wrongs, while her rights already have the only protection which they can have consistent with justice, religion, or nature? The principles which secure to her the blessings and happiness which she now enjoys, were only realized by ages of philanthropic effort. The most learned and devoted men have earnestly labored to place them upon the foundation of eternal justice. They are shaped in the mold of human nature. They were born in the darkest ages of woman's degradation and oppression. As they have been gradually developed, woman has been gradually elevated in the scale of being, until, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the edifice of legal justice stands forth the proudest triumph of human reason, while woman, relieved from her wrongs and oppressions, is securely placed upon its highest architrave.

Thus situated, how could she be so regardless of her own true interests as to desire to make a movement, untried in human experience, and which must be attended with the most dangerous consequences? She can not attain a higher social position; she may reach one much lower. Every change in the social and political polity which sustains her in her present position is fraught with startling dangers to her. But again, she is tempted with the forbidden fruit.

But instead of the serpent tempting her with the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and saying to her, "Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be open, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." She is now tempted with the exercise of uncongenial rights, and the serpent says, "Ye shall not surely fall from your present position in society; for man doth know that in the day ye exercise these rights, then your eyes shall be open, and ye shall be as men, exercising all the rights and duties of men." Now the error into which the serpent would lead woman, is the same in each of these temptations, for she can no more be as men than she can be as gods.

But the resolutions demand equal rights for woman in every respect, socially, morally, and politically, for they say "that the monopoly of the elective franchise, and thereby all the powers of legislative government by man, solely on the ground of sex, is a usurpation, condemned alike by reason and common sense; subversive of all the principles of justice; oppressive and demoralizing in its operations, and insulting to the dignity of human nature," claiming also the free control of property, and the exercise of every other right and duty which man is called upon to perform in all his public and private relations. All history and experience prove that a class or caste of persons intellectually and physically superior to those with whom they are politically associated, soon obtains the complete control of public and private authority, and the less capable classes are reduced to servitude and oppression. That woman is intellectually and physically inferior to man in those qualities which pertain to the successful exercise of political rights, has, it is thought, been

incontrovertibly established; and, therefore, all that prevents her from sharing this common fate of mankind, is because she is not politically associated with man, but placed under his protection.

The sexes being each required to exercise different rights, and to discharge different duties in the plan of human happiness, are endowed with different natural attributes, with a different order of passions, with a different degree and class of emotions and feelings; in short, their entire natures are totally different, and, therefore, every human undertaking, which requires of the one the performance of duties which nature requires of the other, or confers the same rights and duties upon both, must be just as successful as human efforts always are, when man attempts to subvert the laws of God. How, then, are we to form a political or civil equation out of man and woman? What would a man be worth that was equal to a woman; or what kind of a creature would a woman be that was equal to a man? The one would be a contemptible nonentity, and the other a frightful monstrosity. Hence, it is entirely essential that each sex should act in its proper sphere, and in its own distinct line of duty, in order to maintain the nice equipoise in which the God of nature has balanced the scheme of human happiness. Whenever its equilibrium is destroyed, man sinks in the scale of being.

When woman awoke amid the warblings of the birds of Paradise at the dawning of the first Sabbath morning, she rejoiced in the purity of her character, and in the enjoyment of perfect happiness, unembittered by the sorrows and afflictions of transgression. But she yielded to the tempter. Then were all the sons and daughters of men involved in the effects of sin, and the celestial scenes of Paradise

passed away, and then came the trials, the wrongs, the oppressions of a world of transgressors, eating every day of the fruit of which God has commanded them that they shall not eat. That first act of disobedience deprived her of the pleasures of a Paradise, and subjected her to the miseries of degradation and oppression. It involved alike man and woman in the effects of sin, but she, being the "weaker vessel," sank the deepest under its heavy strokes.

For long ages she drank the bitter drops of deep humiliation and misery, and by suffering wrong and oppression, she expiated the sin of her first transgression. But the dawning light of returning civilization, after it had been long obscured by the night of the dark ages, shed a bright ray upon the character of woman, and in its steady progress it removed the clouds which had obscured the beauty and loveliness of her exalted nature; and she arose again, not indeed to the unclouded enjoyments of the primitive Paradise, but to the highest position of modern civilized society. Again she is tempted. While she is enjoying the fairest blessings of civilization, and marching in the front ranks of human progress, and by the gentleness and loveliness of her nature, impressing upon the feature of nations the principle of "Peace on earth, and good will to man," will she again yield to the tempter? May God forbid.

But it is urged that woman is "allowed to obtain education, but not encouraged to use it." Now what particular grievance is here complained of can not be definitely ascertained, for what additional encouragement should be extended to her does not appear upon the record. There is no law prohibiting her from "using" her education in any honest manner

that she pleases, and all the literary pursuits are as freely open to her as to the opposite sex. There is no law prohibiting her from successfully engaging in the practice of any of the professions, except the law of nature. If she is naturally incapable of competing with man in the labors of the literary world, or in the performance of masculine duties, let her not so severely take man to task for what is not his fault, but rather Him who made her so.

All the legislative exactments which man could possibly make, and the conferring of all the rights which these resolutions demand, could not, in the slightest degree, alter the nature which God has given her, or qualify her for the discharge of duties for which she is naturally incompetent. She may become an authoress or a teacher, subjected only to those provisos which the laws of nature make. In these occupations the value of the services rendered, generally establish the standard of remuneration. Again, we say do not "scold" man so, because the Creator did not make woman-man. It is not man's fault because woman is woman. What encouragement then is demanded which she does not now enjoy? Does she ask a kind literary tariff to protect her efforts against the competition of the opposite sex? Until this mystery is explained, we shall dismiss the subject.

The complaint that she is "permitted to prepare papers for scientific bodies, but not permitted to read them," likewise merits but very little attention. Why is she not permitted to read them? What stern mandate of her merciless oppressors here interposes to deprive her of her just rights? Does statute or common law? Does any thing else,

for which man alone is responsible, and which he alone has the power to remove? There is nothing of the kind. Why, then, this resolving that man is a usurper? If there is any thing except the laws of nature which prevents her from reading such papers, if she regards this as one of her inalienable rights, it is custom. But who establishes custom in such matters? Woman, almost entirely; and hence, if there is any wrong done her in this respect, she herself is the author of it. In proof of this we need only note the fact, that no woman of respectable abilities has ever appeared before the public as an orator or lecturer, or in any other literary capacity, who has not been treated with the greatest respect, and no man of respectable reputation has ever accused her of assuming undue rights and privileges.

It is true that woman is much oppressed by conventionality; but it is almost entirely through her own influence that this despot is established and maintained upon his throne. In civilized society, if woman is not invested with the power of making laws she is invested with the almost equally-important power of shaping those customs which control human conduct. When a custom receives her sanction, man scrupulously conforms to it, but if she vetoes it, it requires more than a majority of two-thirds to give it the authority of a popular custom. Exercising this power, she is her own oppressor; and, while she is not deprived of any right or privilege, which is essential to her welfare and happiness by the laws of her country, against which all this bitter complaint is made, many, very many, of those rights and privileges, which are most essential to her enjoyment and independence, are fettered

by customs of her own making, and which she alone can remove. Now, simple justice and consistency require, that before she raises an outcry against the tyranny of man, that she remove the despotism of herself; that, before she demands the repeal of laws, which are themselves the firm supporters which sustain her in her present exalted position, that she simply abolish those arbitrary and whimsical customs, which not only fetter the enjoyment of many of her essential rights and privileges, but also prevent her from discharging many of the most important duties, which the designs of God and the interests of humanity require at her hands.

When woman, as a sex, shall have the moral courage to unite in a determined effort against the unreasonable and unnecessary customs, which now hamper the exercise of many rights, and prevent the discharge of many duties, which her own welfare and independence demand, then will all her real oppressions be removed, and she will be "encouraged to use" her education, permitted "to read her papers before scientific bodies," and she will stand forth in the pure and exalted nature with which her Creator has endowed her, the happy realization of the grand ideal of her existence, THE GLORIOUS AND HARMONIOUS BLENDING OF USEFULNESS AND LOVELINESS.

But the last objection which we shall notice to this so-called reform, is, that it is contrary to the principles of the christian religion. These resolutions demand for woman the exercise of equal rights and privileges with man in all the relations of life. If she assume equal rights and privileges, she is invested with equal power and authority in the formation and establishment of all the regulations and institutions

which are to govern man in every sphere of life, and, therefore, instead of "wives learning in silence and with all subjection," and "submitting to their own husbands," as woman's will is quite indomitable, and her colloquial powers very considerable, if man desired to have any peace in the family, it would be quite necessary to reverse the christian order, and husbands learn in silence and with all subjection, and submit to their own wives. Let us see if the teachings of the Bible demand equal, civil and political rights for man and woman. We shall quote from the New Testament, although the same doctrines are taught in the Old Testament.

"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of every woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." 1 Cor. xi: 3–8.

"Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as with the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ; so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." Eph. v: 22, 23, 24.

"Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." Col. iii: 18.

"Let the woman learn in silence and with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." 1 Tim. ii: 11–14.

"Likewise ye wives, be in subjection to your own

husbands; that if any obey not the word, they also may, without the word, be won by the conversation of the wives." 1 Peter, iii: 1.

So we might add passage to passage to establish the same principle; but it is certainly unnecessary, yet it is one of the strange delusions of the age, that those persons who are the most strenuous advocates of this new invention, profess to be sincere and consistent ministers of this same gospel. Now it is necessarily certain, that either the principles of the christian religion, or those of the Woman's Rights Movement, are false, for as they teach diametrically opposite principles, they can not both be true; but which is true and which false, we shall leave to the Rev. Ladies and Gentlemen who advocate the "Movement," to decide for themselves.

But while these Rev. folks are deciding this important point, let every sincere christian rejoice that the sacred precepts in which he founds his faith, and also the operations of nature by which we are surrounded, teach us the same lesson in regard to this important matter, and that the word and work of God are in harmony. Any discrepancy here would be fatal to the truth of the christian religion; for there is a possibility that Scriptures, as we read them, may not be the true word of God; but it is utterly impossible that nature, as it really exists, can not be the work of God. Hence if the Scriptures taught us that woman should be invested with equal rights and privileges with man, while her nature disqualifies her for the proper exercise of such rights and privileges, the authority of nature must prevail against the authority of Scripture, as being the most reliable expression of the will of God.

Every christian should read the will of God in the book of his works as well as the book of his word.

Neither volume can be correctly understood without it is studied in connection with the other, and a thorough knowledge of both is entirely essential to a correct understanding of the will of God, and the nature of man. God has opened the great book of nature before the eyes of all humanity, and in this book he has registered all the laws by which he governs man as a natural being, and we are taught a lesson from its pages by the experience of every day. Every time we observe the operation of a natural law, or seek the true cause of an effect, we are reading in this great volume, and ascertaining the will of God. Every surrounding object bears the impress of his omnipotent seal, and all the events of life and results of human actions are only exemplifications of the laws of nature. No human power can resist or evade the operation of these unchangeable laws, while the enjoyment of true happiness is the reward of acting in accordance with the will of God as thus expressed, and misery, pain, and death, are the inevitable penalties which attend its violation.

But who can walk forth amid the smiling beauties of the natural world, and enjoy the loveliness with which God has robed the creation; who can walk beneath the umbrageous canopy of the giant oaks, and thus contemplate nature in her unmutilated grandeur, until the soul is lost in bewildering reveries, and feels that it is holding sweet communion with its Creator; who can look into illimitable etherial space and there behold innumerable shining worlds hanging as though they were pendant upon the Almighty arm; who can look thus into the very face of a beneficent omnipotence, and yet deny his existence? Who can thus read in the bible of nature without exclaiming, in the language of inspiration, "O Lord, how

manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches."

In accordance with this necessary agreement between Scripture and nature, we find that if woman yields obedience to the precepts of Scripture, she fulfills the requirements of the laws of her nature. She can not violate the teachings of the Bible, without at the same time, and by the same act, violating the laws of her nature, and consequently suffering the inevitable penalty attached to such violation. Human events are controlled by human action. The laws of nature, which manifest the will of God, operate with perfect regularity, but the action of men upon which these laws operate, are continually varying; and hence result the variety of events which occur in every day life, and in the history of man. These laws operate upon every human act, whether it be trifling or important; and if the act be in accordance with the requirements of these laws, the event or result produced is beneficial to mankind; but if the act is in violation of these requirements, the event or result is disastrous to mankind, and produces misery and suffering. Hence the fate of woman, as well as man, depends upon her own conduct; if her actions are in accordance with the requirements of her nature, she will be happy and rise in the scale of being; but on the contrary, if her actions are in violation of the laws of her nature, her misery and degradation are as inevitable as God is omnipotent. She may have complete control over her actions, but the laws of her nature God alone controls, and she can no more control these laws than she can control the revolution of the planets of the solar system. Hence woman will be woman as long as she remains a human being, all the inventions and contrivances of man to the contrary notwithstanding.

But although God governs man by unchanging natural laws, the operations of which man can in no wise resist, avoid, or control, yet we find that we have some restless spirits in our own age, who so far mistake the object and power of human action, that they would systematically set themselves to work to repeal the laws of nature, and to institute, in their stead, by human legislation, a system of laws which they seem to think would be much more just than those of their Creator, and would relieve poor woman of many wrongs and oppressions which are inflicted upon her by her Creator. It is to be feared that these ladies and gentlemen, when they attempt to repeal the laws of nature, or which amounts to nearly the same thing, to make human laws in defiance of natural laws, will find themselves in the same situation that mythology represents the heathen god Mercury. It is said that he attempted to steal the thunder-bolt of Jupiter, but found it too hot for his fingers, and was obliged to drop it. They will find that the nature of woman is not subject to the jurisdiction of human law, and that they have attempted to steal the prerogative of a higher power. How supremely ridiculous is the whole gist of these resolutions, which supposes that unjust human laws are all that prevent woman from becoming equal to man in the exercise of rights and discharge of duties.

We have now considered the most important claims contained in the resolutions. We have entered at large upon the discussion of the nature of woman as it regards the exercise of the rights there demanded, and it is thought that it has been conclusively shown that woman's proper sphere of action is not in the exercise of political or civil rights. As we have been

mostly engaged in denying rights to woman, it is but proper that we should now point out some of those rights which are congenial to her nature, and specify some of the duties which she may successfully discharge; for it is too obvious to require any demonstration, that a being such as she, endowed with the noblest attributes of human nature, and capable of attaining the highest state of human existence, is invested with rights, and intrusted with duties, the proper discharge of which is of the utmost importance to the interest and welfare of humanity. We shall accordingly proceed to consider the rights and duties, the proper exercise and discharge of which enable her to exert a controlling influence over the human race, and to demonstrate that she is thus invested with a controlling power over the formation of political laws and institutions, and that she can exert this influence only by the proper exercise and faithful discharge of her legitimate rights and duties.

We therefore propose to consider the influence of woman, only as it is exerted in a public capacity; and as many of her rights and duties have been incidentally noticed in the preceding pages, it will be needless to repeat them here, farther than is necessary to present the question intelligibly to the reader. It has been shown that man is placed upon the earth, subject to certain inexorable, unyielding laws, which were coeval with his birth, and that the operation of these laws is placed far beyond his control. God has thus placed man; and created such an order of things as we find existing around us, for reasons which are incomprehensible to human intelligence, and are, therefore, not proper subjects for human inquiry, but what these natural principles and conditions are, which so intimately affect human welfare,

are the grandest and most important objects of human investigation.

> "To know thyself; presume not God to scan,
> The proper study of mankind, is man."

As the force of these laws extends to every human act, and it is impossible for man to control or escape their operations, it follows that a strict conformity to all their requirements is the source of all human happiness, and that the violation of them is the source of all misery and suffering, and, hence, it is obvious that if we would learn how to be happy, we must ascertain their relation to, and bearing upon, every act which we are required to perform in all the relations of life. These principles admitted, the study of the relation or connection, which exists between the particular nature of man, and the universal nature by which he is surrounded, becomes of the first importance to man, and conformity to its requirements the highest object of human existence. Upon this basis must be founded all true happiness; that inestimable blessing, which it is the professed aim and object of every member of the great human family to obtain. But how vain, how inconsistent, how unreasonable are all the various plans and schemes which are attempted in the futile hope of attaining this great object in some other way than that designated by the God of nature. Most persons think that happiness consists in the accumulation and possession of excessive wealth; many think that to indulge in the follies of fashion, is to be happy; some seek happiness by indulging in one vice, and some in an other, and as all practice more or less of vice, which necessarily prevents the enjoyment of true happiness, we consequently, seldom, if ever, meet a person who is truly happy.

Yet, notwithstanding man is thus unhappy, he is

not so because his Creator made him so, but because he makes himself so. God has offered him happiness upon conditions, which he might easily ascertain and obey; and punishes him with suffering and misery if he disobey. Yet he perverts the beneficent designs of his Creator, and thus, by his own acts, converts the means of his happiness into the source of his misery. While the attainment of happiness is the object of all human effort, that effort is so directed that it necessarily defeats its own purpose. While true happiness is to be gained only by acting in strict accordance with the laws of nature, man commences its pursuit by violating these laws, and then because he is unsuccessful, he says he is unfortunate. Every human being will be thus unfortunate so long as he continues to violate the laws of nature, and unsuccessful every time he engages in a contest with his Creator.

Man does not often wilfully, or maliciously violate the laws of nature; but he does so through ignorance, and as he gropes his way through the impenetrable darkness, which surrounds his benighted mind, he is bewildered and confounded by the events which legitimately result from the regular operation of these laws upon his own conduct, and ignorantly attributes them to the mysterious and inscrutable dispensation of Providence. These laws are fixed and determinate, and man may easily ascertain the conditions of those which most intimately affect his own welfare, and then the way which leads to true happiness would no longer be a profound mystery. As it is, man is an incomprehensible mystery to himself, and after the experience of six thousand years, he seems to have gained no reliable information, which can enable him to avoid the dangerous snags which beset the stream of time. All mankind seems to be

on an expedition of discovery to seek out the road which leads to true happiness, but being led by a false guide, they are seeking in a wrong direction, and consequently, generation after generation passes away, and man still fails to arrive at the promised land.

It is not asserted that all the doubt and uncertainty which attend human affairs, can be removed by the study of nature, for the nature of man is inherently fallible; but effects follow causes with entire certainty, and the laws of nature operate with perfect regularity, and as the events of human life are the effects of natural laws, operating upon human conduct, all that is required to make these effects conducive to human happiness, is to conform human conduct to the requirements of the natural laws, and as man can ascertain what these requirements are, and has perfect control over his own conduct, what is to prevent him from attaining a very perfect state of happiness? When man thus understands how events are produced, the mystery is explained. The mystery consists in his ignorance of very simple facts. When a person violates natural laws, and in consequence suffers an attack of disease, he is frequently at a loss to know the cause of his suffering, but if he thoroughly understood the laws of his nature, he could easily trace the effect to its cause. The ancients were terrified by every eclipse of the sun or moon, regarding it as a manifestation of divine wrath, or as the precursor of some terrible event; whereas, since science has explained the phenomenon, it is beheld with mingled feelings of reverence and awe, as a display of the infinite power and goodness of God.

All is simple and consistent when once it is understood. But why has man gone off to investigate the phenomena of other spheres, while he has so

grossly neglected the phenomena of his own nature? It is certainly important to understand the natural laws which control the system of worlds, but how much more important is it to man to understand the natural laws which control man himself. Those distant spheres will fulfill the beneficent purposes, for which they are designed, even though man should neglect them, but can he fulfill the beneficent purposes for which he is designed, if he neglect those immutable laws which decide the effect of every human act. No human act which accorded with the requirements of nature ever yet produced pain or suffering; no act which violated them ever yet failed to produce its unhappy results; no human undertaking which fulfilled these requirements ever failed of success, all that violate them are necessarily unsuccessful. The unpardonable ignorance which prevails among mankind in regard to the principles of nature, is the principle reason why so much folly, vice, and crime, so much suffering, misery and woe, prevail in the ranks of humanity.

How strange it is, that man, endowed as he is with all the faculties of rationality, can not be induced to consult his own interest, and promote his own welfare, by earnestly studying the real conditions of his earthly situation. As it is, he is the mere foot-ball of nature, kicked about by the operation of her laws, and yielding to her stern authority, with subdued submission, as though he were the martyr of honest effort, in a world of chance, whereas if man would devote himself to the study of himself, and observe the lessons thus learned, and coöperate with nature in promoting his own happiness and success, instead of finding her a stern and relentless mistress, severely punishing him for every act of disobedience, he would find her a true and faithful friend, whose

every act is an act of benevolence, and whose only object is, to aid him in securing the enjoyment of true happiness.

If persons are amenable to laws, the provisions of which they have no means of ascertaining; if they do not know whether a given act will incur a penalty or receive a reward, they must unavoidably be unhappy and oppressed. If a tyrant can arbitrarily establish laws, and inflict punishment upon persons, for acts, which they had no opportunity of knowing, were contrary to any law, such persons are subject to the worst form of oppression, to which man can be reduced. With infinitely more force do these results attend the operation of the laws of nature, for the penalties of their violation follow with unerring certainty, yet God has not instituted them capriciously, nor in the manner of a tyrant, for He instituted them, when he created man, and they have operated with perfect regularity through all the ages of human existence, and He has endowed man with capacity and affords him ample opportunity to ascertain the provisions of all the laws, which govern him as a natural being. Yet, in this advanced age of human existence, man is still groping his way in doubt and darkness; uncertain whether nature will reward or punish his acts, thus subjecting himself to tyranny and oppression, while he has it in his power to be free and happy, and regarding the regular and definite operations of the laws of nature, as the inscrutable dispensations of a mysterious providence. In such a state of things, how can it be otherwise, than that the world should be flooded in vice and folly; and that wrong and oppression should stalk forth unrebuked, in the light of a civilization, which is itself a cloud of darkness, so far as regards the most essential and fundamental interest of humanity.

If only the time, which is now spent in the worse than useless occupation of novel writing and reading, were properly devoted to the study of man and the laws of nature, it would shed an effulgence of light upon the world, from which vice and folly would shrink with shame, and no longer dress themselves in virtue's garb, in order the more effectually to embitter the cup of human happiness. It seems strange that the noblest faculties of rational beings can be perverted and vitiated to that degree, which enables them to derive more pleasure and satisfaction, from the vain pursuit of the visionary phantoms and unnatural creations of modern romances, which holds no allegiance to truth, and disregards and misrepresents all the laws of real being; than they can derive from the study of those eternal and immutable principles, which constitute man what he is, and connect him with all the objects of the surrounding world, and in reading the will of God, as he has written it with his own hand upon the broad face of nature.

The most important acquaintance which any person can make is with himself. It is the acquaintance, which, of all others, should be most carefully and assiduously cultivated. Whether our own nature shall be our friend or foe, is determined by our own acts. If ourselves act the part of a faithful friend, nature will never be backward in reciprocating the friendship, and will always reward us with the kindest favors; but if ourselves are faithless, and treat her with indifference or neglect, she resents the indignity with a stern and unsparing hand. She is a devoted friend and an uncompromising foe. She faithfully protects and rewards those who abide by the terms of allegiance, but grants no quarter to those who make war upon her government. But we must all be either her friend or foe, for her govern-

ment extends to the farthest limit of human existence. Her laws are all beneficent, but unyielding, and hence, if we will not accept the rewards of obedience, we must suffer the penalties of disobedience.

But while man goes plodding his way through the world of human life, unacquainted with the laws by which he is governed, their frequent violation is unavoidable, and hence he frequently suffers the most fearful penalties, and but rarely enjoys the sweetest rewards. Certainly, if man were acquainted with the laws which govern him as a natural being, he would not wilfully and deliberately commit those acts, which must inevitably entail upon him unmitigated suffering and misery. But it requires the faculties of rationality to enable a being to act the most irrationally. If these faculties are properly developed, they are capable of accomplishing much higher purposes than mere animal instinct; but if they are perverted they lead to much greater evil. Hence the evil which is in the world, results from the perversion of the rational faculties of man. And hence, man, being endowed with rational faculties by their perversion, acts more irrationally than his horse, for the man will wilfully and deliberately commit acts which his rationality ought to teach him will defeat his own happiness, and produce misery and suffering; but the horse, if left to his own instinct, and is not forced to violate the laws of his nature by man, he will not violate them himself, or indulge in excess of any kind, and, consequently, he will suffer scarcely any pain or misery until the day of his death, nor even then, if he has been strictly virtuous. There is scarcely any disease or deformity among the wild herds as they roam at large upon their native plains.

Are misery and suffering the necessary concom-

itants of rationality? Must man necessarily be more miserable than the lower animals, because he is endowed with a higher order of faculties? How long are the attributes of the highest rationality to remain the source of the grossest irrationality? How long shall the choicest blessings of God be converted by man into his direst curses? How long, is it asked? Even until man shall learn the laws of his nature and obey them. With all his boasted rationality, let him take an important and instructive lesson from the brute, when its nature is not perverted by himself. If he thinks that man suffers more and the brute less, as the necessary consequence of any natural organization, he is very much mistaken. There is not the slightest necessity of man, in his highest state of civilization, provided it be a true civilization, founded upon his nature, suffering any more or any greater variety of disease or misery than does the wild beast roaming at liberty in his congenial climate, and reposing in his native lair, away from the haunts of men. Indeed, there is not so much, for the rationality of man should teach him the laws of his nature, and to guard against their violation; whereas, the instinct of the wild beast does not, in all cases, guard it against the violation of natural laws. But the cause of the great difference in the amount of human suffering, and the amount of suffering among the lower animals, is because the lower animals do not pervert their instinct, while man does pervert his rationality, and the unperverted instinct of the lower animals guard them against the violation of natural laws, while the perverted rationality of man causes him to recklessly violate the most important laws of his nature.

From the above reflections it is obvious that human happiness can be attained only by a strict compliance

with the natural laws which relate to man, and it is also obvious that every human undertaking, the accomplishment of which will require human action, which is in violation of these laws, must not only utterly fail, but must also inevitably involve the actors in suffering and misery. As man can in no wise exercise any control over the laws of nature, and as these laws operate with such stern certainty upon all his actions, it is evident that the only means by which he can exercise any control over his own state or condition of existence, is by ascertaining these laws and conforming his actions to their requirements.

Hence it follows conclusively, that if woman is to exercise any control over her earthly condition or state of existence, she must do so by acting in accordance with the requirements of her nature; that is, she can not violate the laws of her nature, and thereby promote her welfare as a human being. Now it was shown, when we were considering the resolutions that woman is not endowed with those natural qualities which are essential to the successful exercise of political or civil rights, and hence were she to attempt to exercise these rights, it would require action upon her part, which would be in violation of the laws of her nature, and, consequently, it could not possibly promote her welfare as a human being, but must inevitably involve her in the consequences of violated natural laws. The argument may be syllogistically stated thus: all human undertakings which are contrary to the laws of nature must be unsuccessful, the attempt, by woman, to exercise political and civil rights would be a human undertaking contrary to the laws of nature; therefore, the attempt by woman to exercise political and civil rights, must be unsuccessful. Hence it follows, that woman can not exercise any

salutary control over the formation and establishment of political and civil institutions, by the exercise of rights which are uncongenial to her nature, and, therefore, it results that if she can exercise this control, she can do so only by the exercise of those rights and the discharge of those duties for which nature has qualified her. That she may, and does do this, we will now proceed to consider.

Man and woman are equally subjected to the laws and institutions of civil government. She is prosperous and happy under the protection of just laws, but unjust laws, perhaps, more disastrously effect her condition than that of the opposite sex. Hence it is obvious, that if she is invested with no power or influence in the formation and establishment of the laws and institutions by which she is governed, she is continually liable to suffer wrongs and oppressions, which neither God nor man has invested her with the power to avert or to mitigate. Now it is a sound principle of political justice, that the influence of all those that are governed should be properly exerted, and have its just weight in the formation of government, in order that the rights of all may be protected, and, therefore, if woman does not possess the power of properly exerting this influence, she is deprived of her just rights, and either the laws of God or man need reform. But as it has been shown that she can not exert this influence in a proper manner, by the exercise of political or civil rights, and as she does not claim, nor can there be extended to her, any other rights by human laws which can enable her to exert it, it follows that if she is deprived of her just rights in the formation and establishment of civil government, that she is deprived of them by the laws of God.

How can it be possible that God has endowed

human beings with the noblest attributes of human nature, and then placed such human beings in such an earthly situation, that even the proper exercise of these noblest attributes can exert no influence in shaping the affairs, and in promoting the true interests and welfare of humanity. Is the fairest of all God's earthly creations without a useful object? Is she herself created only to become a useless butterfly of fashion—to help nice young men of fashionable worthlessness kill the time which they should devote to honest effort? No. She is created for a higher and a nobler purpose. But because she is not invested with the right to unsex herself, because she is not permitted to attempt to make a man of herself, by the exercise of all the rights, and discharge of all the duties which belong to man alone; let us see if she is, therefore, invested with no rights and exercises, no influence in the formation of the political institutions by which she is governed. Let us see if it is really essential to human welfare, and necessary to protect woman against wrong and oppression, that we should set ourselves about effecting a reform in the laws of nature.

We have already had occasion to remark, that the position which woman occupied, was a correct exponent of the condition of human society. Now why is woman more degraded in the savage state, and more elevated in the civilized state than man? Is it because man, without the aid or influence of woman, gradually raises in the scale of being, as he merges from the savage to the civilized state? We know that the condition of woman is uniformly elevated as man becomes civilized; but has the influence of woman nothing to do with the progress of civilization? Ah, there is the gist of the question. No nation ever has become civilized, unless woman were at least partially

acting in her proper sphere, exercising her legitimate rights, and discharging the duties which she alone can discharge; and we hazard nothing in the assertion, that no nation ever will. The duties which God requires at the hands of woman, and the influence which she exerts over human society, are too vitally important to be neglected or misdirected, without the most disastrous results.

Although man were to faithfully discharge every duty which progressive civilization requires of him, yet where woman fails in the proper discharge of her legitimate duties, man can no more attain a true civilization, than the eagle can take his lofty flight with one of his wings broken. Indeed, it must be assigned as one of the principal reasons that man is still lingering, as it were, at the very starting point of true civilization, is because the sterling qualities of woman's nature are perverted by a misapprehension of her true mission upon earth; and thus, instead of being an active and efficient promoter of substantial progress, the tendency is to convert her into a mere useless ornament of society; a kind of fashionable, fancy toy, which only does to look at, and play with. How is it possible to conceive a more unreasonable mistake than that to suppose it is woman's true mission here below to display little white hands and delicate forms, and to zealously engage in the important duty of trying how very small she can wear her bonnet, and how extremely large her hoops? Yet such are the decided tendencies of the age. How can it be expected that true civilization can be promoted in an age, when woman becomes the more respectable the more she is enabled to neglect the discharge of the most essential duties which are required of her? Civilization, under such influences, must become degraded into mere licentious

effeminacy; and the sterling qualities of human nature must become corrupted and debased by the love of wealth, of extravagant luxury, and of vicious display in dress, and style of living; and fastidious, fashionable, extravagant worthlessness become the condition of life, which shall most captivate the minds, and become the aim of the rising generations of youth.

As woman thus impresses her own character upon the civilization of the age, it is obvious that true civilization can be attained only when woman shall act in her true sphere, and shall faithfully and properly discharge all the duties which are devolved upon her by the scheme of nature; and hence, it results that, as long as the tendency of the age is to make her a mere useless, fashionable, parlor ornament, we must always have a perverted civilization; and, therefore, it is obvious that our approximation to a true civilization must always depend upon the conduct of woman. If she act in the sphere for which nature has qualified her, and properly discharge her legitimate duties, we must necessarily advance; if she act in a sphere for which she is not thus qualified, or neglect the discharge of her proper duties, we must necessarily retrograde.

These views being correct, it is perfectly obvious that woman is invested with a controlling influence over the political institutions by which she is governed. Although the scheme of nature requires that man shall protect woman in the enjoyment of her legitimate rights and privileges, yet she is invested with an influence over him which molds his nature into shape, and directs his energies. Thus she is invested with the power to secure her own protection, and to exercise the rights which really decide the character of the institutions of civil government.

Man is a mere machine, driven by the impulses of his nature. The physical powers are the machinery of man, and his mental faculties are the motive powers by which the machinery is set in motion. The hands never act, nor the feet never move, except by the impulse of the mind. The mind wills, the body acts. The mind controls the body, and hence those powers or influences which develop and thus control the faculties of the mind, control man, both in his mental and physical capacities.

But that it is the influence of woman that develops and shapes the faculties of the mind in the youth of man, scarcely need be demonstrated by argument. The youthful mind is submitted entirely to her control at that period of its existence when its faculties are as pure and innocent as the God who gave them, and when they receive those impressions and developments which they retain for ever afterward, and which determine the action of the man in after life. This is the most important of all human rights, and the duties and responsibilities which are created by its exercise are the most fearfully important which are devolved upon the human kind. She is thus invested with the right to develop the faculties of an immortal mind, which is to determine the fortunes of the man in time, and the fate of the soul in eternity.

"The fire-side," says Mr. Goodrich, "is a seminary of infinite importance. It is important because it is universal, and because the education it bestows, being woven into the woof of childhood, gives form and color to the whole texture of life. There are few who can receive the honors of a college, but all are graduates of the hearth. The learning of the university may fade from the recollection, its classic lore may molder in the halls of memory, but the

simple lessons of home, enameled upon the heart of childhood, defy the rust of years, and outlive the more mature, but less vivid picture of after years. So deep, so lasting, indeed, are the impressions of early life, that you often see a man in the imbecility of age, holding fresh in his recollection the events of childhood, while all the wide space between that and the present hour is a blasted and forgotten waste. You have perchance seen an old and half-obliterated portrait, and in the attempt to have it cleaned and restored, you may have seen it fade away, while a brighter and more perfect picture painted beneath, is revealed to view. This portrait first drawn upon the canvas is not an inapt illustration of youth; and, though it be concealed by some after-design, still the original traits will shine through the outward picture, giving it a tone while fresh, and surviving it in decay. Thus it is with the fire-side—the great institution of Providence for the education of man."

Woman, and she only, has Providence appointed and qualified to teach in this great institution for the education of man. It is her peculiar nature that she possesses peculiar powers for infusing into the youthful mind the noblest principles of true humanity, and of enlisting and developing those faculties of the maturing mind which elevate and ennoble human character, and this fact alone establishes, beyond all question, the sphere in which the God of nature has designed and qualified her to act. Her nature mild, gentle, persevering, patient, submissive, affectionate, and lovely, exerts that influence over man which arouses into action all the divine attributes of his nature. Thus as she is man's inferior in the performance of all the sterner duties of life, she is infinitely his superior in the discharge of those nobler and more lovely duties which she alone can

perform, and which are of more vital importance to the true interests of humanity than those which are exclusively devolved upon him.

Exercising these rights, and exerting this influence, how fearfully important, and how holy is the mission upon which she is sent. When she is intrusted with the infant mind of man, it is pure and spotless, unperverted by a single pernicious passion or sentiment, and capable of receiving and retaining any principles which she may impress upon it; and when her duties are performed, and he goes forth to mingle in the strife and struggles of life, and to exercise the rights and discharge the duties of a citizen, the principles and motives are impressed upon his mind, which for good or for bad, are to control his acts in after life. Woman! look upon that prattling infant, as it lies helpless upon your knee. Behold in it the germ of the future man, the type of the universal humanity. God has there spread out before you the pure and spotless tablets of that guiltless mind, and calls upon you to write upon them with your own hand the future destiny of that child. Angels of heaven protect her while she performs the fearful duty. The consequences which shall result from the manner in which this duty is discharged, will speak forth in every act of that child, as long as it shall remain a denizen of time, and still speak in yet more startling tones, when time shall be no more.

Woman: look upon that infant as its helpless and angelic beauty pleads for the faithful and earnest discharge of your fearful duty. You love it with a heavenly love, every emotion of your soul, every affection of your nature, are bound to it by a sincere fondness and devotion, which rise far above the coldness of worldly motives. The slightest indications

of disease send a thrill of terror to your heart. Ah, should death enter there, and with ruthless grasp, snatch away that purest and sweetest gem of earthly nature, how it would change all the loveliness of nature, and the pleasures of life, into glooms and frowns, which could bring no relief to the heart too deeply wounded. Oh, cruel monster! how can'st thou with relentless sternness desolate an affection, pure and holy enough for heaven itself, and bedew the brightest and most joyous abodes of life with the tears of sorrow, by blighting that lovely plant which was just budding beneath the warm sunshine of a mother's love, to ripen into the fruits of mature manhood. Yet it is often so.

Look upon that lifeless infant, as it lies locked in the cold embrace of death, while the impress of purity and innocence are yet stamped upon its countenance, and its loveliness and beauty still beam forth, even from the pale shadows of death. But hush! as the mother mournfully kneels beside the little corpse, as it is about to be committed to its kindred dust, and impresses the last devoted kiss, and sheds the last burning tear of grief, and looks for the last time upon that countenance, now sad and pale in death, but which love, alas, has rendered but too dear, could she then brush away the mystic vail which conceals the hidden future, and behold her darling child as he might have been had he been spared by the hand of death, but steeped and blackened in all the vices and miseries which attend the erring boy when the mother's influence has not been properly exerted, and she failed in the proper discharge of her fearful duties; could she have seen this, how her tears of grief would have changed into tears of joy, and she would arise from her last devotion, thanking God that her lovely child had been called home to heaven

before the purity of that soul had been contaminated by all the ills and evils which beset frail humanity, and which so frequently lie concealed beneath the most enticing pleasures and enjoyments of human life. Woman! as you love your child, devote all the energies of your soul to the proper discharge of the responsible duties which you owe to that child, and its future usefulness shall bring to you the sweetest pleasures which can gladden a mother's heart, but if you fail, its future vice and disgrace may bring to you the bitterest woe that a mother's broken heart can feel.

Youth is the seed-time of life, and if the seeds of vice and immorality be sown, they will mature into vicious and immoral acts. The human mind is essentially active, all its faculties are formed for action, and action is the essential element of their existence; they are developed into strength by action, and it impresses its own character upon them. Hence it is impossible to prevent the action of the mind, or to prevent that action from deciding the character of the man; and hence, if the mind is not properly gratified with virtuous action, the youth will be necessarily impelled into the practice of vice. It is this continual action of the mind that forms the education of the man, and hence if the youth does not receive a moral, it will receive an immoral education. But the siren song of vice is peculiarly enchanting to the youthful mind, while the teaching of virtue, unless dressed in an attractive garb, are very repulsive. Hence the practice of vice becomes the pleasure and recreation of the young mind, while moral discipline becomes its task. It requires no profound learning in human nature to be able to tell, under such circumstances, which will make the most lasting impressions upon the maturing mind, and

which will exercise the strongest influence over the future man. Under such circumstances the very nature of youth compels it to love vice and hate virtue.

It must be obvious to every one, that nothing can qualify woman for the proper discharge of her responsible duties, except a thorough knowledge of the laws of human nature. She is intrusted with the instruction of the human mind at that period when the chart is being formed which is to direct it through the journey of life. The school-teacher, who so many mothers seem to think relieves them of their responsible charge, can never discharge the duties of a mother. Merely learning the rudiments of science can not implant the principles of true virtue and morality in the youthful mind. These seeds must be sown by the mother, and the tender plants nurtured and matured by the genial warmth of a mother's love and a mother's influence. How certainly can we tell the manner in which the mother's duty has been discharged at home, by the conduct of the child at school. If the mother has suffered the seeds of vice to take root in the youthful mind, they can never be eradicated in the school-room, but there the youth seeks vicious companions, and the weeds are cultivated instead of destroyed, and in manhood they yield an abundant harvest of vice and misery.

But mothers do not often fail in the proper discharge of their duties through willful negligence, but through ignorance of what those duties are. Who can reflect, without a shudder, that the mind is governed by immutable laws, that the question of vice and virtue depends upon its being developed in accordance with these laws, and that those to whom its most important developments are intrusted, know absolutely nothing of these laws. The present sys-

tem of female education teaches woman nothing in regard to the proper discharge of her most important duties. Indeed, they have directly the opposite tendency. In fact, it would be very hard to conceive of any plan by which she could be so successfully taught that which she should not know, and left untaught that which she should know, and thus so effectually defeat all the noblest purposes of her Creator, as by placing her at one of our modern fashionable boarding schools. It is most generally the case that young ladies here learn a little bad French, and get an imperfect smattering of high-sounding science, which is most uncongenial to their nature; and, while they are obtaining this important knowledge, they are so faithfully educated in false pride and fashionable folly, that they are rendered thoroughly worthless for life, as far as regards the proper discharge of all their most essential duties.* Thus is woman educated in the higher circles of civilized society; and thus qualified, the infant mind, in all its purity and innocence, is placed in her charge, and she is required to develop it into the shape which is to decide its future vice or virtue. It can be properly developed only in accordance with the laws of its nature, and every violation of these laws is most fearfully punished, but of the real nature of this immortal mind and its natural laws, she is entirely ignorant. Thus the materials for making a virtuous and useful man are placed in her hands, but her education not having qualified her for the proper discharge of the duties which she is called upon to perform, she frequently botches her work, and makes a rascal.

---

* We shall have occasion to notice this subject again in a succeeding essay.

Of all the duties which are devolved upon the human race, there are none which require so much skill and knowledge as the proper cultivation of the youthful mind, and yet there is no duty in all the wide circle of life's relations which is not better understood. Of all earthly plants it is the most delicate, and yet it is capable of receiving the highest state of cultivation, and yielding the most abundant harvest of richest fruits. Mothers almost universally bestow the most anxious care upon the culture of the youthful mind, but that very care is too frequently the cause of the ruin of those whom they would save. It is not from a want of desire to do their duty, nor from want of effort made, but it is the want of correct knowledge of the manner in which those duties should be performed. It is not unfrequently the case that they over-do their duty in their anxious efforts to fix the principles of virtue firmly in the youthful mind.

Youth is, by nature, endowed with little desires and levities, the gratification of which the over-careful mother supposes would lead to bad results, and endeavors to prevent them, but being natural they are gratified by stealth, and to excess, and thus is induced a habit which may overthrow every principle of virtue which she has succeeded in implanting in the mind. Every innocent gratification becomes vicious by excessive indulgence, and when the natural levities of youth are unduly restrained, whenever an opportunity offers when they may be gratified without the fear of punishment, they are almost always indulged in to excess, and thus are frequently formed in early youth, those vicious habits which defeat all the plans of usefulness in after life. The great object to be attained in the proper development of the mind is to render the practice of virtue pleasing

and attractive. If it be practiced merely through fear of punishment for practicing vice, whenever it is thought that the punishment can be escaped, vice will be practiced in preference, which has a tendency to fix in the mind a love for vice, and a hatred for virtue. The operation of these principles exert no light influence in causing the great amount of vice which prevails in the present age. The only means by which virtue can be permanently fixed in the youthful mind, so that it can withstand the temptations of life, is by encouraging the proper gratification of all natural desires, and by affording facility to the enjoyment of all innocent amusements, not merely such as a perverted religious conventionality may consider as innocent, but all such as are naturally innocent aside from religious prejudice, and by teaching the youth, upon the principles of nature, the real pleasures and substantial happiness which reward the practice of true virtue, and the misery and suffering which inevitably punish the practice of vice.

Then will virtue no longer be practiced as a hateful task, and vice secretly stolen by the youth, when the watchful eye of his parent is not on him, will no longer be his pleasure, but virtue will be practiced for the love of itself, and vice, appearing in its true deformity, will be shunned as a monster, and thus will be thrown around the mind of the youth a substantial bulwark, which no temptation can overthrow, when he is no longer under a mother's watchful care. There exists in every unperverted youthful mind, an active, positive desire to please, an inborn love for those acts, which bring such an abundant harvest of gladness to the little heart, and it only requires to be touched by the magic wand of a mother's love, and influence properly exerted, to be awakened into the most sincere and heartfelt acts of virtue. Look upon

that little face, beaming with joyous smiles, in the sunshine of a mother's love. She has touched the native beauties of the mind, and it appears lovely as an angel. Ah, but beneath those joyous smiles there slumber angry passions, which may be awakened by misdirected education, and instead of an angel, it will appear as a devil. Those joyous smiles and playful happy pranks, are changed into angry frowns and fierce passions. But as every act and thought leaves its footprint upon the mind, and all its faculties are developed and strengthened by exercise; it follows, that whether a higher or lower class of faculties are to be developed, depends upon the education.

How frequently is it that when the child has committed some little mistake or transgression, that the mother indulges in a violent tirade of angry invective and abuse, or resorts immediately to corporal punishment, which only induces a spirit of hatred and revenge, and thus the very soul of the little erring innocent is torn by the surges of the fiercest passions of its nature, and which will make an impression there, which will break forth in acts of violence and madness in all after life. This is downright murder of the diviner qualities of human nature. How much better would the mother have discharged her duty, if, instead of displaying her own angry passions, and arousing those of her child, she had, in a spirit of kindness and affection, explained to the little innocent errer the reason why the act was wrong, and portrayed in a simple and attractive manner, the ugliness of vice, and the loveliness of virtue, and in this way awakened in the mind a sincere desire to do good, and thus her mother's influence would have kindled a blaze of love upon the shrine of that little heart, which would have enlisted in the practice of virtue, all the noblest attributes of human nature.

In the first case, only the fierce passion of hatred and revenge would have been aroused into action, in the second, only those of love and affection; and instead of angry words and spiteful acts, the little proffered lips would have silently asked the kiss of forgiveness; and when we consider that each of these thoughts and passions makes its impression upon the youthful mind, and develops those faculties which are to control the future man, what startling importance does the mother's actions assume? Although it is the mother's duty to avoid arousing angry passions in the mind of the child with all possible care, yet it is no less her important duty to maintain an uncompromising parental authority. Granting unrestrained indulgence is not the proper way of acting with kindness and affection toward the child. Indeed, this is failing entirely to perform every duty of a mother. But resorting to corporal punishment is the extreme remedy; indeed when there are no other means of inducing the practice of virtue, and of fixing its principles in the mind, the case is quite hopeless. The rod is not an essential implement in developing the noblest faculties of the human mind, love is the only incentive to sincere virtuous action. Solomon wrote under the old dispensation.

But let it not be inferred from the above reflections that all minds are equally endowed at birth, and that if men be educated in the same manner they will be of equal intellectual capacities. Nothing is more variant than the faculties of the human mind, not even the features of the human countenance. But all men of sound minds are endowed with the same mental faculties, but the difference in different minds consists in the different degrees of strength in which these faculties exist. For instance, one person has stronger moral faculties, and

an other stronger animal faculties, and hence there will be a material difference in the conduct of these two persons, and hence arises all the variety of human conduct. But it is the nature of these faculties that they are developed and strengthened by exercise, and by this means only; and hence it is obvious that any class of faculties may be restrained, or cultivated and strengthened at pleasure. Hence, by correctly understanding the nature of the mind, the degree of strength of its different faculties may be definitely ascertained, and where an ill-balanced mind is to be developed into a properly balanced one, it may be done by observing the laws of nature, and restraining those faculties which are already too strong, and cultivating those which are deficient. For instance, if the animal faculties predominate over the moral and intellectual, the animal faculties should be anxiously restrained, and the moral and intellectual faculties properly developed by careful cultivation. Hence, it is obvious that, although a mind may be endowed with very unfavorable propensities in youth, yet they may be, in a great measure, overcome, and the mind formed into a moral shape, by the proper course of education; and, on the other hand, no difference how noble the natural endowments of a mind may be, they may be perverted by false education. It may be observed that minds which are naturally endowed with predominant immoral propensities, are so endowed as the result of violated natural laws, and these violations may be avoided, and the predominant endowments of all infant minds become naturally moral by the proper appreciation and observance of the laws of nature.

We have now sufficiently explained the principles of the mind for the purposes of the present essay, but its vital importance will require a frequent re-

currence to the subject in the succeeding essays. These principles being true, they form the basis of the most important duties which woman is required to discharge. How seriously, how earnestly should she investigate them! They are themselves the unyielding laws of nature, to which every human power must necessarily yield. She is the great architect who shapes the destinies of mankind. Nature furnishes her material in the innocent and untutored mind, and of its pliant faculties she is required to build the future man. In every word, in every look, in every act of her life in regard to the child, she is shaping and forming the materials which are to constitute the human edifice, which is to buffet with the surges of time, and yet endure when time shall be no more. The laws of nature are the rules by which she is required to work. If she is faithful to these rules the edifice will be a glorious and a useful one, if she neglect or violate them her work will only be a human wreck, the habitation of prowling vice and misery, and whose utter deformity will appear still more startling in the light of eternity. May God sustain and direct her in the discharge of her fearful duties.

But the duties of woman are not confined to the development of the youthful mind. There is no period in human existence in which, acting in her proper sphere, she does not set enthroned in her kingdom of love, exerting a powerful and essential influence over human affairs. From the cradle to the grave, she is the guardian watcher, casting a gleam of hope and light into the darkest hour of adversity and misfortune, and, by the loveliness and gentleness of her nature, soothing the keenest agonies, suffering, and affliction. Let enemies curse and accuse, let friends prove unfaithful, let the world

frown and hate, yet the true woman clings with a heavenly devotion to the object of her love. In the youth and the mature age of man, the genial glow of her affectionate soul casts a ray of sunshine along the path of life, and each succeeding stroke of adversity only rivets more strongly the enduring bands of her love, and her faithfulness and devotion only end with death to begin with eternity. May God grant that she shall no more listen to the whisperings of the evil tempter, but that she may retain the integrity of her nature, and faithfully discharge the duties of her heavenly mission.

ESSAY II.

THE UNDUE INFLUENCE OF WEALTH.

Of all the vices and follies, which are at present blighting the noblest feelings of human nature, none posess such potent energies for the accomplishment of evil, as the crushing power with which modern civilization has invested the possession of wealth. It is the controlling influence of the age. It has well nigh vanquished every opposing interest; absorbed every affection of the human heart; and established itself as the universal standard, by which all human worth is to be estimated. Its conquest is complete, it reigns supreme, and all the best interests of humanity, and all the higher motives of human nature, are its abject subjects, which only have the privilege of humbly presenting their petitions, and abiding the decision of this supreme ruler of the human heart.

"Gold, yellow, glittering, precious gold!
This much of this, will make black, white; foul, fair;
Wrong, right; base, noble; old, young; coward, valiant;
Ha you gods: why this? What this, you gods? Why this
Will lug your priests and servants from your sides.
Pluck stout men's pillows from below their heads:
This yellow slave
Will knit and break religions; bless the accursed;
Make the hoar leprosy adored; place thieves,
And give them title, knee, and approbation,
With senators on the bench. SHAKSPEARE.

Gold, with the unlimited power with which modern

society has invested it, is the most heartless tyrant that ever oppressed the human race; a tyrant devoid of all the promptings of mercy; he is not urged by the motives of kindness, nor acknowledges the binding force of the laws of human sympathy, but the only test which he applies to all his operations is, will it yield dollars and cents. When the inordinate love of wealth has taken possession of the mind, every other consideration is discarded with a cold heartlessness, which would seem beyond the reach of a rational being endowed with all the divine faculties of the human soul, and the devotee freely sacrifices at the polluted shrine of his merciless deity, his own happiness and that of his fellow-beings, and with unfeeling recklessness will open up the fountains of human suffering, from which can flow to others only misery and distress, but to him only the coveted gold.

What of the sacred rights of others, what of the remonstrances of that inward monitor whose "small still voice" rebukes him, and what of those reciprocal duties which the welfare of the human race demand of each and every member of it? the laws of man permit him to act thus, and so he defies the laws of God, disregards the claims of humanity, violates the promptings of his higher nature, and becomes, not a rational being, but merely a machine for making money. Such a person is a machine impelled by all the debasing passions of human nature, but not regulated by the dictates of its higher motives. Denying himself of all the rational enjoyments of life, voluntarily torturing himself with physical pains and sufferings, and plunging his soul into an untimely torment upon earth to grasp gold for the mere love of gold; to hoard it, not for the purpose of enjoying it himself,

but to prevent others from enjoying it, and to gratify the sordid and debasing passion of avarice. We have thousands of such machines in active operation in our midst, and the spirit of the age has a direct tendency to debase the immortal faculties of the mind, and to transform the human race into money-making machines, and man is to perform no nobler part in the grand scheme of creation, than to act as a kind of a human coffer in which to lock up gold.

That this is contrary to the design of man's creation, that the God-like faculties of his mind point him to a higher destiny, and that the exalted motives and passions of his nature, qualify him to act a nobler part in the scheme of being, no one will deny. It will be the object of this essay to demonstrate that this state of society does prevail, that it is the parent of many of the vices and follies of the age, and that it is poisoning the very fountains of public and private virtue and morality.

But this state of society does not result from the avaricious or miserly disposition of the people, but it results from the overwhelming power and influence, which society itself has bestowed upon wealth; therefore these evils do not necessarily result from any ineradicable frailty in man, but rather from the falseness of the present constitution of society. A person's importance or position in modern society, being determined by the length of his purse, it necessarily becomes the chief object of life to lengthen that purse, and hence it becomes the only effort of man to obtain the exclusive possession of more of the things of this world than are really necessary to contribute to the natural and legitimate comforts and enjoyments of life, and thus the necessaries of human existence, which the Creator evidently designed for the sustenance of all his human creatures, become

accumulated in the hands of the wealthy, while many of the unfortunate are deprived of many of life's most essential comforts.

But here the question will arise, what are the legitimate or virtuous comforts and enjoyments of life? In the present age it is almost the universal opinion that the pleasures and enjoyments of life can be derived only from the luxuries and pomp of wealth; and hence, universal man is engaged in a most desperate effort to obtain wealth, by means fair or foul, and consequently he makes every other interest subservient to this great cardinal object of human existence; insomuch that modern humanity positively refuses to accept comfort and enjoyment upon any other terms. Man, therefore, voluntarily makes himself miserable until he obtains wealth, and then wealth is very certain to make him thoroughly miserable during the remainder of his life. So the world goes. It is true, that in the present state of public opinion, most of the supposed pleasures and enjoyments of life are to be derived only from wealth. But we never will admit such to be either natural or legitimate. The social condition of a people who sustain such a public opinion, is far from being healthy. The cause of it is simply this: Such a public opinion estimates only the value of the money, while it has no rule by which to estimate the value of the man. The only way in which a person's respectability can be ascertained in modern society, is by counting his money. The consequence is, that plain, honest virtue and morality, which count nothing in dollars and cents, are set down as perfectly worthless; and, therefore, are not sought by persons who wish to be respectable, but the black-hearted villain, who has lied, cheated, robbed, and outraged every principle of right and justice, and

thus accumulated wealth, which almost smells of the blood of suffering humanity, from whom most of it has been wrongly exacted, receives the smiles and flattery of a false and perverted society.

While such is the condition of society, the wonder is, not that there are so much crime, suffering, and misery in the world, but that any genuine virtue and morality are permitted to retain a foothold upon an earth so desecrated. Public opinion urges the citizen to acquire money by any means that he can, so that it be not actually criminal in the eye of the penal law, and assigns him a position in society which corresponds precisely with his pile of money. And his position is elevated as his pile of money raises, or lowered as it falls, and he is kicked entirely out of respectable society if he happens to lose it all; while the plain, honest man engaged in the unprofitable practice of virtue, and, as a clear conscience is bad stock in trade, it is reasonable to suppose that he accumulated a larger capital of virtue and morality than of money and merchandise, and the consequence is, that fashionable society, having no rule by which to estimate such "stocks," refuses him a position in what is termed "good society."

Now, such a state of society is fundamentally and radically vicious, and yet no one can deny that the passport which entitles a person to enter the higher circles of society must be written upon gold, and public opinion, when it inspects the document, asks no questions as to how this gold was gotten. This state of society results from this, that it offers a most extravagant premium upon rascality, while sterling virtue and integrity are at a ruinous discount. Where is the inducement to practice virtue and morality, while money is the only basis upon

which a respectable position in society can be sustained? The practice of virtue prevents a person from joining in the general grab-game for money, and according to modern civilization a man can not be respectable without money. Why, while a person is honestly engaged in the practice of these old-fashioned qualities, these modern men of respectability will cheat him out of his very bread; and hence, he is forced to turn rascal in self-defense, and commence the practice of virtue upon the modern and improved plan of sharp trading and aristocratic gambling. Correct principles teach us that a good character is formed by the practice of true virtue and morality; modern society teaches us that it is made of "gold."

Now, as society gives precedence to those who have the most money, and arranges its members according to the length of their purses, who will be encouraged to discharge those sacred duties which every man owes to his fellow-man, and seek to develop the more lovely qualities of his nature, while such a course of life actually retards his progress to social position and influence? Thus modern society really discourages the practice of genuine virtue. Virtue will be readily acknowledged to be all very well, and all speak of it in terms of highest admiration, but how often are persons received into aristocratic society, or what is falsely termed our best society, merely because they are virtuous and honest persons, or how often are wealthy rascals excluded from such society, provided they have escaped the penalties of the criminal law? But if the law does happen to overtake the man of wealth, he is discarded, not on account of his criminality or dishonesty, but because he was such a fool as to be caught in it, for there are persons who occupy the

highest positions in society who are publicly known to violate, every day, the most fundamental principles of right and justice, and if his money-making transactions were submitted to the test of those principles which should govern the acts and intercourse of humanity, he could not appear in any other light than that of a human fiend.

But there is not much danger of the law, where there is plenty of money. A heavy purse thrown into the scale of justico soon destroys its equilibrium. It really seems as though modern laws were made to punish poor men for their misdeeds, and not men of wealth, and also to facilitate the money-grabbing operations of the rich man, and to enable him more effectually to deprive the poor man of his just rights. The rich man may crush the poor man, and rob him of all the means of the comfortable enjoyment of life, because he has not the pecuniary ability to set the expensive machinery of justice in motion. He has no money, and, therefore, according to modern justice, he has no rights, and he may suffer and die for the want of the smallest part of that superfluity in which the wealthy around him are surfeiting, and can not possibly use or destroy, but withhold from him with a heartlessness and selfishness that might well make the devil blush with shame.

The whole system of our education has a tendency to teach the importance of this one object. The first thing that the prattling infant is taught, is the love of money. Almost the entire education, from infancy to manhood, is only an exposition of the principles of money-getting; and life, from manhood to the grave, is exclusively occupied in the practice of those principles. If the child is taught science, it is not for the love of knowledge, but because it

may be profitably employed in the acquisition of wealth. If the pious mother teaches it the sublime doctrines and principles of religion, it is generally in subordination to the great cardinal object of life, the acquisition of wealth. In short, all species of knowledge that can not be profitably employed in the acquisition of wealth, is regarded as useless, and hence the student generally pursues his studies no farther than suits this sordid purpose. If he studies law, it is merely to enable him to obtain the fees of his clients, if he studies philosophy it is because he thinks it will teach him the shortest road to wealth; and even if he studies theology, it is too often only to escape the more laborious modes of making money.

While the whole system of education, which developes the human mind, and impresses its own features and principles upon it, is thus only the embodiment of the grossest venality, how can it be expected to be otherwise, than that the people should run mad in the pursuit of wealth, and sacrifice to its acquisition all those noble principles which adorn and elevate humanity? It is well that the inborn principles of virtue are so deeply laid in the human soul. While the pernicious influences of a false education, and of a still more false public sentiment, are besetting these principles on every side, and refusing them their proper social position, and elevating their antagonistic principles to the highest positions in society, and, while public sentiment is pandering to the basest and most selfish passions of human nature, and refuses to acknowledge the lovely and sterling beauties of true moral character, it is encouraging to the lovers of humanity to know that virtue still sustains the contest, that it is still throwing up its fortifications in the stronghold of the human heart;

and that, although the assailing vices make frequent breaches in the wall, yet appealing to the purest sympathies of the human soul, and relying upon the God of nature, who protects its cause, true virtue returns valiantly to the contest, armed with the weapons of right and duty. It is pleasing to reflect that, although the controlling influences of the age so much discourage the practice of true virtue, yet it holds a check upon human conduct, and there are yet those who love it, and practice it for itself.

Yet the prospect is dark and gloomy. The cause of virtue is hanging in dubious balance. She is contending against fearful odds. Even much of the ostensible virtue which is displayed before the public gaze with glaring parade, only conceals unsuspected vice, the more dangerous because it is invisible. It is still necessary to keep up the appearance of virtue. All acknowledge that it is right and proper, and all make high pretensions to its practice. It is impossible to more unpardonably insult the man who is daily engaged in the practice of vice and dishonesty than to tell him of it. The profession of virtue is used as a convenient cloak to hide the blackest acts of vice; and, while the heartless knave most acts the devil, he most talks the saint. Oh, could we lift the vail which hides the human heart, and behold the black designs which are too often working there, and maturing into acts of vice and dishonesty, and around which the false tongue has thrown the attractive beauties of virtue, to lure on the unsuspecting victim, we might almost despair of the cause of human virtue. Thus virtue is most outraged while it is most flattered.

How often are we deceived by these false lights, these dazzling appearances of virtue, which have no

home in the heart, but are only the meteoric illusions which dance upon the falsest tongue; until we are almost ready to conclude that human nature itself is inherently vicious, and that true virtue has no existence, except in the imaginations of moralists and philosophers.

But the cruellest of all the stabs at virtue is, where the base hypocrite conceals himself in the cloak of religion, and folding himself in its ample folds, with nasal cant and high pretensions, he perpetrates his misdeeds; and when the vail is torn from him, and his true character displayed, it leaves a stain upon the sacred cause, and shakes our confidence in the permanency of human virtue. Thus all acknowledge the necessity and goodness of virtue, all profess to practice it, and where they are not in possession of the genuine article, they attempt to counterfeit it. But why do persons attempt to keep up the appearance of virtue, while in reality they are practicing vice and dishonesty? Merely because it serves as a kind of basis, upon which to rest their money-grabbing operations. And while the genuine article is very troublesome, the counterfeit answers an excellent purpose in the way of dressing up acts which would not appear very well were they left naked. It is used as a kind of lever with which to pry out dollars and cents, a mere auxiliary in money-making; for if many of our esteemed citizens were to permit their acts to appear in their real light, many vicious acts would be found dressed in virtue's garb. But this is easily avoided. They carefully conceal the real nature of their acts, make a parade of ostensible virtue, (honest persons are deceived by the appearance,) and they quietly victimize them again and again, and become more respectable every time they repeat the operation.

But while all acknowledge the necessity and propriety of virtue, what real and efficient encouragement is extended to it by public sentiment, what protecting guard is thrown around it, and where is its practice properly rewarded, by making it the only means of reaching the highest position in society? Is humble virtue, or wealthy-pampered vice most respectable in modern society? If we are to take preaching and professions as the exponents of public sentiment, the reign of vice and immorality is quite at an end, and there is scarcely a dishonest person in the world. But alas, when we turn from the deceitful tongue to the unvarnished acts of man, how painfully are we disappointed. It almost seems as though all were preaching virtue and practicing vice. It appears as if more or less vice and selfishness enter into almost every human act, and while the sincerely virtuous man is earnestly striving to walk in the path of moral rectitude, he is constantly beset by a thousand glittering temptations, which urge him to turn but slightly from his course, to pluck the enticing but poisonous flowers of vice. Vicious selfishness, and an entire devotion to the accumulation of money, offer him friends and respectability; will enable him to associate in the best society, and enjoy all the luxuries of wealth, while humble virtue can only offer him peace with himself, his fellow-man, and his God. How strong are the temptations, and how few there are who can withstand the evil influences which beset every grade of society.

By swerving slightly from virtue, many opportunities of obtaining money are placed within his reach, which he could not reach from the "strait and narrow way." And as he can acquire position and respectability only by the possession of wealth, he is almost irresistibly forced by the falseness of

public sentiment, to turn from the path of virtue. He yields but slightly at first, and with many misgivings, and is frequently lashed back by his wounded conscience; but with each succeeding indulgence he deviates farther from the path, and blunts the edge of conscience, until, at last, he is lost in the flood of vice. It is the fewest persons whose principles of virtue are so firmly fixed, as to withstand the terrible assaults of this false sentiment.

All are not hurled into the vortex of vice, but nearly all yield more or less to its temptations. Why is all this? Simply because public sentiment acknowledges wealth as the only basis of position and respectability. The mass of the people can gain influence, or reach the higher grades of society in no other way except by the possession of wealth, and hence we find them sacrificing every other interest, and making the acquisition of wealth the great object of life. So long as wealth is made the source of standing and respectability in society, and virtue is regarded as of subservient importance, and wealth can be best obtained by the practice of dishonest principles, wealth must remain omnipotent, and virtue powerless. The most substantial pleasures of virtue are remote, the transient pleasures of vice are immediate. There is nothing so gratifying to the vanity of human nature, as to be placed in a position in society above the ordinary condition of men. Humanity is so blind that it will voluntarily forego the prospect of heaven, and incur the frowns of hell to enjoy a little "brief authority" upon earth; and when that authority can only be obtained by the possession of wealth, it disregards all nobler motives, and recklessly loosens itself from all its heavenly moorings, and rushes in wild pursuit of the earthly phantom, which alone can feed its insatiate desire.

What does perverted humanity, when thus blinded by a debasing passion, care for virtue or morality? Its object can be attained only by the acquisition of wealth; virtue and morality rebuke the course of life which this requires, and therefore they are at uncompromising war. A small amount of sordid gold will weigh more in the scale of fashionable respectability than all the humble unmoneyed virtue in the world. Wealth invariably confers position and authority; virtue, without wealth, can not possibly do it. Such are the forces of the contending parties. Who can doubt the result of such a contest? Ah, the great battle has been raging for ages, and the mourning of distressed widows and orphans, and the groans of helpless sufferers, which are continually rising from the earth, and reverberating around the throne of Omnipotence, and pleading, in piteous tones, the cause of outraged virtue, while crime rests not, day nor night; and vice, emboldened by its success, is reaping rich harvests from all human transactions, and even enters the christian sanctuaries, and there breathes its foul breath upon the very altar of God: all these proclaim the triumph of the victor.

But can this state of things be remedied? Are not suffering, and misery, and vice, the necessary results, and therefore inseparable from the very infirmities of human nature? It is perhaps true that on account of the fallible nature of man, human misery and vice can not be entirely prevented; but it is also true that the amount of vice and misery existing in the world, depends almost entirely upon the moral and intellectual condition of man. If his debasing passions are given full sway, unchecked by the proper development of his higher sentiments, the prevalence of vice and crime is inevitable; but if these passions are controlled by the moral and

religious sentiments of the mind, the practice of virtue among the mass of the people, will result as a necessary consequence. These propensities and sentiments are developed by the system of education to which the mind is submitted. The inevitable result is, that if that system of education is mercenary in its tendencies, if it develops the selfish or animal propensities, instead of the moral and intellectual sentiments, it degrades instead of elevates mankind.

But public sentiment depends upon those faculties of the public mind which are most active, and those faculties are most active which are most exercised or cultivated; therefore, the system of public education forms the public sentiment. We do not mean mere school-room education, but the education of life. Now, public sentiment regulates the thoughts and acts of men. Whatever is indorsed by public sentiment, is very generally received as the law of private conduct. Man is essentially an imitative creature, and he pursues a certain course of conduct, not always because he is convinced that it is right, but because others do so, and it is the general custom of the country. Hence each distinct nation of people has distinct manners and customs, and conduct which is regarded as altogether right by the public sentiment of one people, is frequently thought to be very wrong by that of another; and in every community each individual member must conform to the requirements of public sentiment, or he is in a great measure deprived of the enjoyments of intercourse with his fellow-beings. Whatever public sentiment says is right he must do, or be considered a wrong-doer.

Hence it follows conclusively, that that to which public sentiment attaches the most importance will be the great object to be gained by the mass of the

people, and every other motive and pursuit will be made subservient to the attainment of this one object; and, consequently, if public sentiment attaches more importance to the possession of wealth than to the practice of virtue, the latter will be sacrificed to the attainment of the former; and this will inevitably continue to be so, just so long as men become more respectable in society, and gain higher position by the possession of wealth than by the practice of virtue.

But can this be prevented? Is it not one of the necessary conditions of civilized society that money shall exercise this controlling power? It can be prevented by effecting a radical revolution in public sentiment, and this can be produced by changing the fundamental teachings of the system of public instruction. As soon as public sentiment is taught to regard virtue and morality as the only source of respectability and position in society, as soon as wealth is thrown out of the estimate of personal and social worth, then its possession will become the means of enjoyment, and not the sole object of life; the servant of man, and not his tyrant; and reformed public sentiment will attach more importance to the practice of virtue than the possession of wealth, and consequently virtue will become the chief object of attainment among men.

We therefore assert, that the undue influence which wealth is at present exerting, results from a perverted public sentiment, and that this false principle may be eradicated by a proper system of education; a system which will inculcate the vital importance of the practice of virtue, and assign to it its proper social rewards, and then man will become convinced of the utter baseness and the pernicious effects which inevitably result from making the accumulation of

wealth the exclusive object of life. This position will be fully sustained in the sequel of this essay.

But it may be asserted that this controlling influence of wealth is the motive power, which is impelling the car of civilization through the unbroken forests and uncultivated portions of the earth; that it is unfurling the banners of progress upon every hill side, and in every valley; that it causes the unfruitful, barren, and boundless wastes to bring forth abundant harvests; that it whitens every sea with the sails of commerce, and that every billow heaves upon its crest the necessaries and luxuries of life, which are produced by its energies.

That the power of wealth is an effective agent in developing the resources of a country, when the accumulation of wealth is regarded as the cardinal object of human existence, and this accumulation can be best effected by developing those resources, can not be denied. But is this the only means, or is it the best means, by which those resources can be developed? Can not the industrial and commercial interests of a country be developed without entailing upon its inhabitants all the interminable woes and miseries, which are the inseparable concomitants of this omnipotent power of wealth? Can not the car of civilization be pushed forward by any other agency, except one which strikes a deadly stab at the vital parts of human virtue, and has a tendency to destroy all the ennobling emotions and sentiments of our nature? These are questions of the utmost importance.

If all the benefits and blessings of human progress are to be filtered through, and contaminated by the most debasing passions and propensities of human

nature, then, indeed, is the cause of humanity hopeless. But He who made the heavens and the earth, and the fullness thereof, has provided a way by which good may be accomplished, otherwise than through the agency of evil. He has implanted in the human system, faculties and motives, which only need the fostering care of a proper system of education, to awaken them into active energy, and to enable the higher and nobler sentiments of our nature, instead of its perverted propensities, to carry the cause of progress and civilization triumphantly forward.

But let it not be supposed that the attainment of a true morality would require the abolition of money. Some standard medium to regulate the value, and to facilitate the interchange of the necessities of life, is essential to the very existence of civilized society. Money is not inherently evil, but is only the "root of all evil," and it is a "root" which requires cultivation, or it would produce no evil consequences. Money, therefore, should not be abolished from society, but its power should be properly held in check, and it should not be permitted to usurp the absolute control of human action. It has an indispensable part to perform in the essential plan of civilization, but its accumulation should not be the only, nor the principal object of cultivated society. Civilization certainly is not instituted merely to facilitate the accumulation of money, but money is instituted to promote the interests of true civilization, but it must be confessed that modern civilization has been prostituted to the base purposes of a mere money-making scheme.

An honest effort to obtain money for the purpose of gratifying the legitimate desires of our nature, or for the purpose of contributing to the natural enjoyments and comforts of life, is not avarice. Toil and

labor are the inevitable laws of our nature, and the necessary results of our terrestrial state of existence, and that we must be industriously engaged in the prosecution of some work which will be useful to ourselves, as the only basis upon which substantial virtue can securely rest. Our mental and physical organizations are formed for action, and while a properly conducted life of action brings peace and satisfaction to the mind, it develops and strengthens all the faculties and powers of the mind and body, and we move in harmonious unison with all the laws of our nature, and the journey of life meanders amid the pleasant groves of contentment, to which we can be conducted only by the faithful discharge of duty, and the sweetest earthly pleasures soothe us into the calmest and purest enjoyments.

But, alas, for him who squanders his precious time in slothful inaction, while the energies of his nature demand exercise, which, not being gratified in virtuous action, seek gratification in vicious action, until he soon drinks the dregs of misery; and thus those means which his beneficent Creator has offered to him as the source of his purest enjoyments, he voluntarily converts into the source of his misery and ruin. Hence, virtuous effort is an essential condition of human happiness.

But is there no other motive which can urge man to action, except the base and sordid love of gold? Is this the only spring which can move the human machinery? Has the Author of our nature required no other duties at our hands, except that our lives shall be spent in acquiring useless and corrupting wealth; and can any rational being suppose that he is faithfully discharging all the high duties which his Creator has enjoined upon him, when all his thoughts and energies are concentrated upon this one object,

and when he sacrifices to its attainment all the principles of true virtue, and all the interests of humanity? He who believes in a final reckoning, and thus disregards all the duties which he owes to God and man, certainly acts with the most reckless inconsistency. With all the charms of virtue, and the gratitude of humanity, with eternal rewards administered by Heaven's unerring justice, as incentives to virtuous action, man, refusing all these, seals the eye of reason, and yielding to a debasing passion, rushes on in the headlong pursuit of peace-destroying, trouble-breeding, sin-provoking wealth.

In establishing a higher and purer standard of morality, it would, therefore, be no part of its object to check the activity of man, but only to divert its present course, to turn it from the exclusive pursuit of wealth, and direct its energies to the promotion of the best interests of humanity. To accomplish this, it is the first duty of every person to devote his attention and energies, in a virtuous manner, to the procurement of that amount of wealth, which is necessary to contribute to every natural and legitimate comfort and enjoyment of life. Further than that in this direction, and for the sole purpose of amassing wealth, it is sin against God and man to go. All excess beyond this deprives others of those necessaries of life, for the want of which they are suffering, and only adds unnecessary superfluity to former adequate wealth, and brings in its train all those troubles and vexations, which are the inseparable companions of excessive wealth.

The man who devotes his life exclusively to the accumulation of wealth, frequently obtains possession of a sufficient amount of property to maintain comfortably a thousand persons, while there are a thousand persons around him who are suffering for

the want of it, and he is miserable because he has got it, and they are miserable because they have not got it; whereas, if the spirit of true virtue and morality prevailed, and man was in pursuit of his true happiness instead of wealth, and each one had a sufficient amount of this wealth to satisfy the wants of nature, none would suffer want, and all would be happy.

But, it may be said that this morality is too exalted and disinterested for human nature, and that the love of money is the only power which can keep the great human machinery in motion, and consequently if this power be removed, man would sink down into listless inaction and indolence; and, without an active motive to urge him on, the great vessel of human civilization would cease to move, and rapidly go into a state of dilapidation and wreck. We will not admit that man is inherently so debased, that the jingle of dollars and cents is the only music of his soul, but it must be admitted that the undue influence of wealth has almost reduced him to that condition; and, until there is a feeling of true and substantial morality founded upon the proper development of the moral sentiments of man, and the trashy, pretended morality, that rises like an ignis fatuus from vicious and debased minds, and glitters with dazzling splendor in all the higher circles of society, be swept away by the reviving breezes of virtue, gold will continue to be the god of civilized society.

The christian may continue to kneel before the altar of God, but as long as society regards one man as more respectable than another, merely because he has got more money, he will be strongly tempted to sell his religion for money; and, until there is some slight conformity in the profession and

practice of christians in this respect, the accumulation of wealth will continue to be the motive power of human action. But, thank God, this is not necessarily so. It is only the monstrous offspring of the debasing love of wealth in unholy and unnatural marriage with virtue and religion; and, this being in direct violation of every principle of justice and righteousness, we will apply to the supreme court of heaven, and, appealing to the moral sentiments of man, we will petition for a divorce. Then will true virtue and religion stand forth before man, clothed in their heavenly garbs of purity and beauty, no longer contaminated by an unholy alliance with a mean and sordid passion, and regenerated man will mount in the scale of being, and virtue will be the polar star which shall guide the great ship of humanity, while it is buffeting with the waves of time, and religion will be the bright beacon which shall guide it safely into the harbors of eternity.

The destruction of this undue influence of wealth would not retard the substantial progress of man; on the contrary, it would give it a new impetus; and, bring in force incentives to virtuous action, which now lie dormant in the human breast, and which, when properly developed and directed, awaken all the most exalted and active emotions and principles of human nature. Man must be aroused to virtuous activity, and, instead of sacrificing the interests of humanity to the love of wealth, he must be induced to sacrifice the love of wealth to the interests of humanity. This can be done only by inspiring a sincere love for virtue itself, and by making it the only source of position and respectability in society, and by demonstrating to man the utter futility of the prevailing idea, that the exclusive pursuit of wealth can lead to happiness, and by displaying be-

fore him the substantial pleasures which reward the practice of virtue, and the bitter penalties which punish the practice of vice.

The tendency of the age is to induce man, after he has accumulated a competency of wealth, to believe that he has discharged every duty which is required of him in this world, and he either retires from the busy strife and contention which agitate society in the pursuit of wealth, and sinks into health-destroying, soul-tormenting, vice-provoking inaction; or else, being once engulfed in the vortex of avarice, he continues to pursue the phantom with redoubled energy, thus increasing his wealth and his miseries, while his misdirected activity only adds to the wrongs and oppressions of suffering humanity.

"Wealth heaped on wealth, nor truth nor safety buys,
The dangers gather as the treasures rise."

The principles of virtue teach man that his duties on this side of eternity are never discharged, as long as he can do a good act; and, although he may have accumulated but few treasures of this world, and laid up many treasures in heaven, yet his task is never finished until he is called home to rest from his earthly labors, and enjoy his heavenly wealth.

"Virtue
Stands like the sun, and all which rolls around
Drinks life, and light, and glory from her aspect."

Every human effort, which has for its object the promotion of human happiness, is the legitimate object of virtuous activity. The incentives to such action are as widespread as the human race, and as numerous as are human sufferers, and its pleasures and consolations are the sweetest that are within all the

scope of human happiness. What, then, is to prevent it from becoming the mainspring of human action, and the motive power which is to push forward the car of civilization, clothed in the pure white robes of virtue, and its object the attainment of universal human happiness, instead of the accumulation of sordid gold? Nothing but a basely false public sentiment.

The crushing power with which wealth is invested in the present age, may perhaps have advanced the cause of civilization, but this is only a collateral result. This is no part of its real object. If the efforts to accumulate wealth develop the resources of a country, it does it merely because such development yields dollars and cents. The only question which is asked is, "will it pay?" And if it becomes necessary to develop the resources of a country in order to make it pay, then such development is made with a strict regard to the rules of percentage, and, consequently, money being the only object, were it possible, after the improvements are made, to blot them out of existence, it would freely be done, provided such an operation would yield dollars.

Now persons who think that this is the only or the best means by which the cause of human progress can be pushed forward, certainly make a very low estimate of the moral qualities of their own species. If the sails of commerce are unfurled to the ocean breeze, it is not because it conduces to human happiness, but because it panders to a base and perverted passion; a passion such, that, if it were left to its own sordid meanness, and the cause of human progress depended upon the success of a single effort, no earthly nor heavenly power could induce it to make the slightest disinterested movement toward its accomplishment. Hence, the undue power of wealth

exerts its influence in favor of human progress no farther than suits its own base purposes.

Can not the cause of humanity be placed upon a more reliable and substantial basis? Is there no other resort, but to surrender it unconditionally into the power of its greatest enemy, merely because that enemy, in the gratification of his own sordid passion, incidentally promotes a portion of its interests, while the wrongs and sufferings which he entails upon it, are tenfold greater than the benefits which he confers? Man, placed in such a situation, is converted into his own enemy, and with all the higher sentiments of his nature undeveloped, and his propensities perverted, and all his energies absorbed in the gratification of a debasing passion, human activity only has a tendency to defeat the scheme of human happiness. Human effort is thus diverted from its true purpose, and the more active man is, the more suffering and oppression he causes among his fellow-men.

How can it be expected, that while the whole human race is engaged in a desperate effort to overload themselves with the cares and troubles of superabundant wealth, and to deprive others of the necessary means of comfort and enjoyment, to be otherwise than that vice and folly, misery and crime, should be the necessary results of human effort? And so it will be, until man learns to direct his action to the promotion of his true interests, the attainment of true happiness by the practice of virtue, instead of defeating the grand design of human existence, by the exclusive pursuit of wealth. Genuine morality and virtue have for their sole objects the attainment of human happiness. It is not selfish, to look first to our own happiness, but it is to be obtained within the bounds of virtue, and at the same time contribut-

ing as much as possible to the happiness of others; but when this much is attained virtue walks forth from under its own vine and fig-tree and devotes its energies to the alleviation of suffering and misery, and to the promotion of the happiness of individual and universal humanity. Here then is an unlimited scope for virtuous action, the great vineyard of the Lord is open, inviting us to enter and labor with him in the advancements of our own happiness.

As the promotion of human happiness is not the incidental result of virtue, but its sole object, it follows that every purpose which has a tendency to promote the welfare of humanity, is the legitimate object of virtuous action. Hence the whole scope of human progress and civilization is brought within its immediate sphere. When we look at the dark picture of civilized man, when that civilization is developed by the controlling power of wealth, and behold the squalid misery and suffering, which moans even in the very shadows of its splendid palaces, and see helpless human beings, who are dying for the want of the very necessaries of life in the midst of wasteful abundance, and vice clothing itself in the garb of virtue and "going to and fro on the earth, and walking up and down in it," and even raising its hydra-heads above the loud professions of christians; while the public sentiment which it engenders, urges the citizen, by all the inducements which it can offer, to devote his energies exclusively to the attainment of an object which undermines the very foundation of human happiness; we are almost ready to conclude, that such a state of civilization entails more curses upon man than it confers blessings.

"Our present civilization," says Channing, "is characterized and tainted by a devouring greediness for wealth; the passion for gain is every where sap-

ping pure and generous feelings, and raising up bitter foes against any reform which may threaten to turn aside the stream of wealth. I some times feel as if a great reform were necessary to break up our present mercenary civilization, in order that christianity, now repelled by the universal worldliness, may come into a nearer contact with the soul, and reconstruct society after its own pure and disinterested principles." It is true, that civilization has much elevated the condition of man, yet, while this inordinate love of wealth has incidentally aided in his advancement, virtue has ever been the real handmaid and genuine promoter of all substantial human progress. How much more glorious would be the triumph of civilized society, if all these withering curses which necessarily result from its present state, could be removed, and human society could enjoy the blessings of a true civilization founded upon the basis of true virtue.

What can be of more importance to man than that the basis of his progress should rest upon the noblest sentiments of his nature, instead of his perverted propensities. Certainly, the best mode of promoting human happiness is not by degrading man. The supremacy of his higher sentiments elevates him in the scale of being, the prevalence of his lower propensities degrades him, and inevitably leads to misery and suffering. Let sterling virtue and morality have control of the human mind, and become the chief incentives to human action, by receiving the highest sanctions and rewards of civilized society, and it will whiten every ocean with the sails of commerce, and bring gladness to the hearts of suffering humanity of every clime and tongue, by the free interchange of the comforts and luxuries of the world; it would transform the hideous haunts of vice and crime into the pleasant abodes of virtue, it would change the

striving and exacting marts of commerce, where now the sole object is to obtain wealth, into the free and unreserved interchange of brothers, seeking not to obtain sordid dollars, but to promote their own happiness and that of others; it would establish institutions for the mental and moral development of man, until chime answering chime, should reverberate around the earth, and smiling humanity in the successful pursuit of true happiness, instead of sordid gold, would stand forth in its true nobleness, disenthralled from the fetters of wealth.

Then, and not until then, will the efforts of man cease to bring misery to himself, and begin to promote his own welfare, and civilization, dressed in the robes of virtue, will bring happiness to all her subjects; and thus man will reach the highest condition of being attainable by human nature. God speed the day. But while the cause of virtue seems to be so hopelessly lost, and the power of wealth seems to be able to withstand any attack that can be brought against it, how is this social reform to be effected? Only by reconstructing society upon the basis of virtue; and this can be done only by giving the practice of virtue its proper value in the estimate of public and private worth, by making it the only source of position and respectability in society, and by creating a healthy public sentiment, by engrafting upon it the fundemental maxim, that man is worthy of regard and preferment, just in proportion to the sterling qualities of his moral principles. Then will wealth cease to be the tyrant of man, and become his servant, and instead of being the sole object of life, it will be merely one of the means of its enjoyment, and the path of virtue, being the road to honor and position, will be universally sought, as the highest object of human attainment; and thus wealth will lose

its undue influence, while the practice of virtue will receive its proper rewards. But as long as society confers its greatest favors and rewards upon the possession of wealth, its exclusive pursuit can not fail to defeat the scheme of human happiness, and to engross the thoughts and efforts of the great mass of the people.

The omnipotent power of wealth has even rendered mercenary the divine institution of marriage, and among the wealthy class it is no longer the union of two hearts in holy love, consecrated by the sacred promptings of purest affection; but it is degraded into a kind of a commercial transaction, or a sort of matrimonial partnership, which is formed in consideration of the amount of wealth which each partner can bring into the concern; and, as a general thing, this matrimonial partnership is formed with as strict regard to the amount of the capital furnished, or to be furnished by each of the contracting parties, as in any commercial partnership whatever. Hence those who are wealthy marry those who are wealthy, thus adding heap to heap in unnecessary accumulation, and if any person who is very wealthy, should marry an other who is not possessed of this essential qualification, it would be considered as the hight of vulgarity, and persons thus marrying for the love of each other, instead of their money, would probably be paraded through the public prints, as though their eternal doom was sealed. How long has it been since the Dean and Boker affair? If the earth had stopped short in the midst of her diurnal revolution, and the sun had stood blazing for twenty-four consecutive hours in the meridian of mid-day, it would scarcely have caused a greater commotion in the circles of

fashionable society. What is the matter? Why, two persons who loved each other have married, and society stands aghast at the awful outrage. Ten thousand giddy tongues are tattling; and it is the principal topic at every tea-table and social party. But why this social commotion? Why, a rich heiress has married an honest coachman.

It does not appear that the coachman was unworthy of the heiress in any other respect than that of a very disrespectable want of dollars. Their respective moral qualities are entirely lost sight of, in the all-important consideration that the one was wealthy and the other poor. Now if some young lady, whose moral qualifications were as great as the "property qualifications" of this young heiress, was sacrificed upon the hymenial altar, to some vicious, sporting scoundrel, it would not have caused the slightest ripple upon the surface of fashionable society. Alas, can not the attention or sympathies of modern refined civilized society be awakened, except by the jingle of dollars?

While such is the state of things, persons are united in marriage, not by the bands of true love, but by the bands of gold, or rather their purses marry, and they are themselves thrown into the bargain. But while wealth possesses the unlimited power with which modern society has invested it, it is the easiest of all things to love the person who is surrounded by its glitter, while it is almost beyond the power of human nature for the person of wealth to love real virtue, beauty, and loveliness, with a true love, when they are unadorned by golden plumage. A "good match" in modern parlance, means that the person who has made the "good match," has married a considerable amount of money, and the person who is given "to boot" is quite immaterial. This is of

secondary consideration, and of very little importance, provided his faults and vices have a golden excuse. A mother will gladly place the happiness of her daughter in the hands of a person whose only merit is his money; while, perhaps, his character has been formed amid scenes of dissipation and infamy; and vice has impressed its indelible seal upon all his principles — a wealthy loafer, whose shining qualities which so captivate the fair sex are vice, fashionable worthlessness, and gold, a contemptible, cumbersome piece of human baggage, who is only a useless trouble upon the journey of life, and who is profoundly versed in all the modes of squandering money, but has an insuperable hatred for all the efforts of industry which produce it; thus the attractive glitter which lured her to her ruin, may soon pass away, and his utter worthlessness appear in its native deformity, and a life of misery and despair be hers.

And yet she would have rejected with contemptuous scorn the proffered hand of the man of honest industry and virtue, unadorned by the glitter of golden plumage, but who walks forth with the bold independence of conscious merit, and with the will and might to contend successfully with the strifes and troubles of life, and as the ceaseless course of time rolls by, it brings to him, and all who depend upon his vigorous arm, the elements of peace and happiness, while the faithful discharge of all the duties which he owes to God and man bring to him the sweetest enjoyments of human existence. How strangely perverted are our ideas of social welfare. Gold conceals a multitude of faults, and vice, when seen through this deceitful medium, is invested with many illusory beauties, and, like the serpent, whose fascinating eye charms the fated bird, until it is cap-

tivated by the attractive glitter, and destroyed by the hidden fangs.

It is astonishing how a large balance in bank adds to the charms of woman. It has truly a magical power, and ladies who have never been suspected of possessing any special attractions, and have been excluded from the circles of the "best society," and roughly hustled to one side, in the eager pursuit of the daughters of fortune, let such but receive the favors of this powerful magician, and she is suddenly discovered to be the most fascinating and captivating of her sex, and immediately she becomes respectable and receives the smiles of good society, and has no difficulty in entering into a respectable matrimonial partnership. It is singular what a love-provoking power it has. When cupid shoots with a golden arrow he inflicts a mortal wound, and is sure of victory.

Marriage is the most important relation of life, and of all human acts it creates duties the most difficult to perform, and the most important that they should be properly performed, and it is followed by consequences the most lasting and dangerous, and therefore it requires the most mature deliberations of any other act of life. It is generally contracted in the most thoughtless and buoyant period of life, when hope and joy beam forth from all human affairs, and robe them in the beauteous hues of pleasure and enjoyment. But, alas! after the fatal knot is tied, and the stern duties which it creates have brushed away the zephyr-like illusions which clothed it in mystic beauty, then, if the fabric of life's happiness has been placed upon a false and treacherous basis, if, instead of having its foundations laid in the immutable principles of nature, bound together by the enduring bands of congen-

iality, it is founded upon the unsteadfast basis of gold, which may be borne away by the fleeting vicissitudes of time, and when this chief inducement to marriage has vanished, and the heavy yoke of its duties bear with tenfold increased weight upon the unfortunates, then a life of misery and distress is almost inevitable.

While wealth is so apt to take wings and fly away, how extremely dangerous is it to intrust life's happiness to its keeping, so that when it does fly away it will take with it all the pleasures and enjoyments of life. How infinitely better for the peace and happiness of mankind would it be, were sterling virtue and morality made the only basis of the marriage contract, for these never take wings and fly away from those that love them, until with the disembodied soul, they take their final flight to their eternal abodes in heaven. Then would sordid wealth cease to be the guiding-star which leads to the matrimonial relation, the magic torch which lightens up the passion of love in the human breast, the potent touch-stone which awakens the slumbering charms of female beauty, the dazzling screen which conceals a multitude of follies and vices. Then would sterling virtue cast its effulgent rays even from amid its abode in honest poverty, and spontaneous happiness would spring up in the genial warmth of its sunshine, and the golden tyrant, hurled from his throne, would fall powerless at the feet of virtue, and would assume its proper position in society, and, instead of destroying, would aid in the promotion of human happiness. How sacred, then, would be the holy union, and what a solemn grandeur would be thrown around the matrimonial altar, and, as the incense of holy love would rise from it up to heaven, there would be rejoicing among angels and happiness among men.

But of all the conquests which the power of wealth has made in modern society, none is more complete than that which it has achieved over friendship. It is astonishing what an intimate connection there is between money and modern friendship. They seem to work hand in hand, wholly absorbed in their own self importance, and carefully excluding from their presence all those who are not respectable according to modern notions, as unworthy of their association. Thus man, as "God created him in his own image," is unworthy to occupy the higher positions in modern society, or to merit the friendship of respectable men, until he has, by "many inventions," succeeded in accumulating a greater amount of the "root of all evil" than can possibly be of any reasonable use to him. Such an amount as is actually necessary to contribute to every comfort and enjoyment of life, will not enable him to reach that most enviable position. "No admittance," is virtually written over the doors of the "best society," as to all such persons, for they are not respectable.

In order to receive the smiles and friendship of society, it is absolutely necessary to possess a greater amount of wealth than can be of any essential service, and, in this way, deprive others of the enjoyments and necessaries of life; if you can succeed in doing this, you are very respectable, and will have many devoted friends, but if you are so unfortunate as to pursue an upright, honest course, which is generally unfavorable to the schemes of money getting, your friends will be alarmingly scarce, and less assiduous in their attentions. But if you are on good terms of friendship with your own conscience, you will scarcely enjoy the friendship of the "best

society." Clear consciences are very much out of fashion there, and they generally disappear about in the same ratio that wealth amasses, so that it usually happens, that they who have the greatest wealth, can not afford the luxury of an easy conscience, which is the inseparable companion of every honest and virtuous man, though he may be as poor as Lazarus. How innumerable are the trials and miseries which the man of wealth suffers, from which the man of honest independence is entirely free.

He is most independent, who is freest from the tyranny of wealth, and, consequently, the greater the amount of wealth that a person amasses, he is thereby the more reduced to a state of slavery. Strange, that human nature should be so perverted, that it would voluntarily seek to rivet the fetters of slavery upon itself, and seek happiness by the gratification of those passions, which unavoidably entail upon it the most withering curses. But wealth is the great dispenser of position and respectability in society, and, hence, the man of wealth will always be surrounded by a throng of courtly flatterers, who are seeking to obtain his favors by a lavish expense of ostensible friendship. What can be more revolting to sterling virtue, than the base intrigues and corruptions, which are resorted to to gain the smiles of this heartless, golden tyrant. The blood of helpless innocence has been caused to flow freely by the Neroes and Caligulas of mankind, but it was only the violence of the transient storm, which soon passed away, and man again became prosperous and happy under more lenient rulers, and these oppressions only affected a small portion of mankind, but man, in his egregious folly, has now enthroned a perpetual tyrant, whose dominions extend to the farthest limits of civilization, and whose power is not sus-

tained by the Pretorian guards alone, but the strong and the weak, the great and the small; yea, all the hosts of civilization are his devoted friends, strenuously engaged in sustaining him upon his throne.

His favored friends commit the greatest outrages in every part of his dominions; his unsuspecting subjects are murdered in the streets and in their very homes; robbery and dishonesty are boldly resorted to by his followers; virtue and innocence are unprotected, while vice and violence receive his greatest rewards; the strong and fortunate deprive the feeble and distressed of the comforts and enjoyments of life, and they are permitted to suffer and die of want, in the very midst of wasting abundance. Oh, what unmitigated tyranny; the most oppressive and heartless that ever man was subject to, yet it is sustained by all the civilized world; by the polished and refined; by the learned and the unlearned; by the professors of religion and the non-professors; by the simple-minded and the talented. When will man cease to be the slave of a degrading passion; a passion which aggrandizes itself by the disregard of every motive of true humanity, and when will unperverted reason assert her sway, and by hearkening to her dictates, man shall realize the ineffable loveliness of virtue, and place her upon her throne in the human heart, as supreme ruler of all his passions and affections?

Persons of wealth bestow the favors of friendship with singular perverseness. They seem to regard the sufferings of those who have not been successful in the lottery of fortune, as of no consequence, and look upon it with as much indifference, as if persons who are not wealthy, are not susceptible of feeling or suffering; as if they were created for the special purpose of pandering to the

vicious appetites and passions of the lords of wealth, and then to be turned away to suffer the miseries of destitution and starvation, for all their wealthy neighbors care, unless they can be profitably employed in adding to their already surfeiting abundance. If the man of wealth, who has, at all times, the means in his power, gives employment to the poorer classes, and thus enables them to obtain the necessaries of life, the relief of the poor is no part of his object, but he does it because, by that means, he can add to his own wealth. How many thousands are there in our cities who are destitute of almost all the essential comforts of life, and how many thousands are there who have a useless accumulation of them? Yet, instead of aiming to alleviate the sufferings of their unfortunate fellow-beings, which the fortunate might do, without abridging in the slightest degree, their own enjoyments of life, their whole effort and object are to monopolize, still farther, the means which sustain human existence, and contribute to the comforts and enjoyments of life, and thus to fix, more permanently and intensely, useless suffering and misery upon the unfortunate portion of mankind.

Modern society has discovered that the masterpiece of God's workmanship is unworthy of consideration, until it has been decorated with the gaudy flippery of wealth, and that the Creator has done his work in such a bungling manner, that the proper development of all the noblest faculties, which he has implanted in man, does not entitle him to the highest respect of his fellow-man. We read that God formed man from the dust of the earth, but modern society has become more aristocratic, and makes him of gold; and hence, it considers that man, created in the image of God, "upright in righteousness and

in true holiness," is unworthy of the respect of this modern improvement in man-making, and so this modern-improved man of "many inventions," kicks the old-fashioned man, created in the image of God, out of the way, as a piece of old, antiquated workmanship, that was made before society had made so much *progress* as it has now.

While the man, who has been successful in the struggle for wealth, thus disregards the sufferings and miseries of those who have been unsuccessful, he bestows his favors and friendship, with unnecessary liberality, upon those who have been equally successful in the worldly struggle with himself, and, therefore, do not require his assistance. The man of wealth willingly befriends his wealthy neighbor, or lends him assistance to an extent which would relieve the sufferings of many of the unfortunate around him, but to whom he denies the least assistance. Thus the wealthy are bound together by the golden bands of a mercenary friendship, to aid each other in the accumulation of wealth, and by sustaining its power they are united in a kind of conspiracy to deprive the unfortunate of their just rights, by monopolizing, in the hands of a few, in the shape of excessive wealth, those means which contribute to the comforts, and constitute the necessaries of life.

The present constitution of society has invested wealth with a kind of attractive affinity, which gives it a tendency to accumulate in large masses; and hence, he who has money, has a great advantage in the struggle for wealth, over him who has none, and thus he who has no real use for it is the person who obtains it, while he whose necessities absolutely require it, is deprived of it, and wealth being only a superabundant accumulation of those means, which

sustain human existence, and furnish the necessaries of life, one portion of mankind thus obtains the possession of more of these essentials than they can possibly use, while the other portion is destitute of a sufficient portion to prevent them from suffering. But the course of wealth can not be controlled by any arbitrary or conventional laws or limitations; and, therefore, the only means by which can be effected any thing approximating to an equitable distribution of the comforts and necessaries of life, or by which can be formed a permanent basis, upon which universal human happiness can securely rest, is by depriving wealth of the crushing power with which modern society has invested it, and thus directing the action of man from its unnecessary accumulation, and directing it to the proper development of the nobler faculties and motives of human nature.

The unsoundness of society is not more obviously displayed in any of its phases than it is in the controlling influence which the possession of wealth is enabled to exert. Elevated far above the necessity of honest effort, the person of wealth looks down with supercilious contempt upon all those who are engaged in the *disgraceful* pursuits of honest industry, and regards them as his lawful prey, and, armed with the power of wealth and the skill of experience, he generally succeeds in emptying into his own coffers the increase of wealth which is produced by their efforts; and for this society respects him. The more his stores increase beyond the amount which is necessary for his happiness, the louder the clatter, and the more deferential the respect which he receives from those against whom his conduct through life is a continual outrage. The more he wrongs humanity the higher he raises in its estimation; and thus he revels

in the smiles and friendship of society, while all are ready to confer upon him any favor that he may desire, and all are at his disposal to aid him in his money-making schemes, and the host of friends by whom he is surrounded is positively oppressive.

But, look out. He is navigating dangerous waters. The vicissitudes of a single day might sweep from under him the foundation of all his importance. A single unsuccessful commercial transaction might sink the basis of modern respectability, and this would cause a greater stampede among his friends, or rather, the friends of his money, than would the explosion of a high-pressure steamboat boiler. In a single day, and without any act upon his part but such as he had performed almost every day of his life, from occupying a high position in society, and enjoying its smiles and its friendship, he is reduced to honest poverty, but he is no longer respectable, and receives the frowns and scorns of society, instead of its favors and smiles; and those who but yesterday were loudest in their protestations of friendship, are perhaps the first to desert him in his humiliation and misfortune, and add to their treachery by heaping upon him slander and detraction. And now the princely halls of wealth, and the glittering circles of fashionable society in which he so lately shone forth so brightly, are closed against him, and nearly all that host of friends who had basked and fawned in the sunshine of his prosperity, now, when he is tottering upon the very brink of pecuniary ruin, and most needs their friendly aid, not only forsake him, but give him a push in his downward course.

He is unceremoniously kicked out of the "best society." Why? Not because he is a less worthy man. Ten chances to one, if he is not more worthy of public confidence and respect. He has been

taught an unpleasant, but instructive lesson, in the mutability of human affairs. Sad experience has swept away the golden glitter which prevented him from appreciating the miseries and woes of the unfavored portion of humanity, it has opened up the fountains of feeling in his heart, and he sincerely sympathizes with the unnecessary sufferings of man; he was before like a sponge, not producing, but absorbing and retaining in useless accumulation the very substance which sustains human existence. He is now willing to enter the arena of usefulness, and manfully lend a helping hand in promoting the real interests of society. But these are not the qualities which render a person worthy of respect in modern society. Why is it that those who used to smile and bow so pleasantly, now treat him with a neglect so cold and selfish that it chills the manly heart? Simply and only because he has no wealth.

Alas, poor man, he has lost all that society loved him for; he no longer holds in his hand that flaming torch which cast such a brilliant light around him, in which sycophants might gambol and twitter; he has lost that powerful magnet which attracts the mercenary friendship of the age, and, true to its nature, it deserts him as soon as the attracting power is removed. The most lovely character of unspotted virtue and integrity, unaided by the re-accumulation of wealth, can not restore him to his former position and influence in society; nothing can do that but devoted, untiring worship, at the altar of society's god, sordid, crushing gold. No fabulous deity of ancient superstition was so exacting with its devotees as this moloch of the nineteenth century. It requires of its votaries that they shall sacrifice virtue, peace, happiness, contentment, and all the rational comforts and enjoyments of life at

its altar, and devote themselves entirely and exclusively to its service, scarcely taking rest neither day nor night, constantly looking forward to the attainment of the one grand object, to receive the smiles of their fickle god. True, some who worship at its shrine, and who love it exceedingly, do not worship it so devotedly as to fulfill all its requirements; but this is only different degrees of the same idolatry, which has an engrossing tendency to enlist all the energies of civilized man in its service. Hence the Scriptures speak of it as "covetousness, which is idolatry."

Such is the tendency of the age. Pampered vice is reaping the richest harvests of civilized society, while humble virtue is toiling as its menial servant. The greatest benefits of modern society are enjoyed by those who wrong it most, while those whose honest efforts alone sustain the social fabric, are considered to be disgraced by these efforts, and are therefore excluded from the circles of our "best society." Such are the social influences which pervert the noblest sentiments of human nature, which divert man from the successful pursuit of his true happiness, and directs his efforts to the attainment of a sole purpose, which so fatally blasts the fairest hopes of humanity.

Look upon life. How happy is the dawning of its morning, when in bouyant youth, the fair creation is robed in the radiant hues of joy and pleasure. How beneficent appear all the works of God as their beauties gradually burst upon the wondering imagination of childhood. The glorious creation is beaming in lovely smiles, and all seems to be made for pleasure and happiness. The new-born soul planted

in earthly soil to bring forth fruit for eternity, revels in the happy consciousness of its own innocence, no anxious care obscures the bright sunshine of its joyousness, no perverted passion is poisoning the pure waters of contentment and careless happiness. The development of the powers of the mind and the body bring forth new pleasures, and, as the gladdening rays of each morning's sun invite the youth to the feast of joy and happiness, which his Creator has so profusely spread out before him, he wonders how it is possible that misery and unhappiness can dwell amid scenes so joyous and lovely.

He looks abroad upon external nature and he beholds that its beneficent Author has made ample provision for every natural human want, he looks within himself and he finds that the virtuous efforts which he is required to make, in order to enjoy the bountiful provision of his Creator, also yield to him the sweetest and calmest enjoyments of life. Thus he sees that God has placed the goal of happiness within the reach of man, the road which leads to it is plain, and with the smiles of heaven to urge him on, and the frowns of hell to deter him from going wrong, how can he fail of its enjoyment? It appears as if God designed to clothe vice and folly in such hideous shapes, and to dress virtue and morality in such lovely garbs, that no perversion of the faculties of human nature could induce man to voluntarily endure the suffering and misery which punish the practice of the former, rather than enjoy the happiness which rewards the practice of the latter. Every earthly and heavenly inducement is offered to urge him to pursue the course of his true happiness, while blighting curses attend every departure from it.

Has not God made man a free agent; and can he by any earthly power be so misguided as to vol-

untarily accept misery rather than happiness? Is he not a rational being? Is he not endowed with God-like reason, to teach him what is right and what is wrong? Ah, unsophisticated youth, if such thoughts naturally present themselves to thy mind, thou dreamest not of the desolating storms of perverted human passions which sweep through these smiling scenes. True, man is a rational being, endowed with moral and mental faculties, but he is also an animal, endowed with animal propensities; and, when his conduct in life is such as to pervert his higher faculties, and arouse his animal propensities into activity, he is the most ferocious, heartless, and unreasonable animal that ever infested the earth.

God never instituted a law, and no created thing ever fell from his hand, but which he designed for ultimate goodness and happiness. Hence, every natural law and every created thing in the heavens and the earth are designed for a beneficent purpose, and misery and suffering can not be the unavoidable results of the operations of natural principles. If God has created any animate being, and placed it in such a situation that all the requirements of his laws might be fulfilled, and yet suffering and misery be its unavoidable lot, He is a malevolent being. But man is so created, and his powers and faculties so exactly adapted to the relations and conditions of external circumstances, that their proper development, in accordance with the natural supremacy of the moral sentiments and the intellect, would unavoidably lead to the enjoyment of complete felicity and happiness. And we now state it as an incontrovertible principle, that did man comply with the conditions which God has established, and upon which human happiness depends, even so far as the inherent fallibility of human nature would

permit, and all the higher principles of his nature were developed to the higher state of which they are capable, misery, vice, and crime would be expelled from the earth, and the millennial era would be fully commenced.

No human action, which is in accordance with the natural laws, can either directly or indirectly cause misery or suffering; and every human action, which is in violation of these laws, will inevitably cause misery and suffering; but every human action must either be in accordance with, or in violation of, these laws; therefore, all the misery and suffering which exists in the world, is caused by human actions, in violation of the natural laws, and hence all that man has to do to arrive at the most perfect state of human happiness, is to ascertain the laws of nature, and act in accordance with their requirements. We believe that man, fallible as human nature is said to be, is endowed with all the powers and faculties which are necessary to enable universal man to enjoy almost uninterrupted happiness; otherwise we must charge his Creator with malignity of purpose. What pleasing reflections crowd upon the mind, when we contemplate man in such a state of development. It does indeed seem chimerical when we view man in his present condition—but we have proved that he may be thus happy by reasoning, to which every person must yield, who believes in a beneficent Creator. Then will human life be a happy preparation for eternal existence, and man, seeking to be happy, instead of wealthy, and fully comprehending the scheme of his happiness, and complying with its requirements, would no longer suffer the interminable woes and miseries which attend the practice of vice.

Suffering and misery are quite unnecessary. Man

can ascertain the conditions of the natural laws which are essential to his happiness, and he can act in accordance with them, and such a course of life will prevent misery and suffering, and render man happy. God has not malevolently doomed man to unavoidable misery. Every pain which we suffer, and "all the ills which flesh is heir to," are only the penalties, which are punishing the violators of natural laws, and hence it is evident that if man ceases to violate these laws, he will avoid the penalties. The Creator has perfectly adapted the inherent qualities of human nature to the conditions of the laws which he has established for the government of man, and if we obey the will of God by complying with these laws, happiness is the inevitable reward, but if we pervert those qualities, and thus violate these laws, pain and misery are the inevitable penalties. Thus, no person is ever sick unless some law of health has been violated, nor does any person suffer the slightest pain without it is the effect of the violation of natural laws.

But it may be said that regeneration and development can not possibly remove the inherent fallibility of human nature. True, but the laws which govern man as a natural being, can be as definitely ascertained as the laws which govern him as a political being. If man devoted as much effort and study to the expounding of the natural laws as he now does to the municipal laws, they would be fully as well understood. If he had his judges and counselors, who made it their profession to investigate and explain to him the laws of God, as he has to explain the laws of man, he would no more violate the one through ignorance than the other. Now how often does he ignorantly violate the municipal laws? Every person of sane mind and common intelligence, has a suf-

ficient knowledge of these laws to know what acts violate them, and that if he is convicted of their violation he will be punished.

Now, if he could be convinced that the natural laws affect him as vitally as do the municipal laws, he could as easily avoid their violation. But the mass of the people are not even aware of the existence of a definite and immutable system of natural principles, and regard their regular operations as the inscrutable and mysterious dispensation of Providence, and, consequently, they violate them ignorantly, and then attribute their punishment to their misfortune. They seem to think that their human law-givers have made an excellent code of laws, but that their Omnipotent Law-giver has made none at all, but governs them by mere chance; and, therefore, they must obey the municipal laws, or they will be punished; but they may violate the natural laws with perfect impunity. Alas! infatuated man, you may escape the penalties of the municipal laws, but the Almighty Judge of the heavens and the earth, sits in judgment upon your acts as a natural being, and your rewards and punishments are as inevitable as He is Omnipotent. The municipal laws are administered by fallible human beings; the natural laws by the infallible God. No act of obedience goes unrewarded; no act of violation escapes unpunished.

Hence, by acting in accordance with the requirements of the natural laws, man would escape the penalties attached to their violation, and as these penalties consist in the suffering and misery which humanity endures, he would thus avoid misery and suffering. But man would still be liable to mistakes and accidents; the inevitable results of his fallible nature, but they would be of such an unimportant

character that they would cause no material interruption in the enjoyment of universal happiness, and when his earthly probation was finished, and nature had run her course, without suffering the pangs of premature decay, he would calmly and happily pass from time to eternity, to enjoy the moral treasures which are placed to his credit in the book of life.

It is wrong to mourn over departed friends and relatives. It is wrong to be afflicted by any of the necessary results of Omnipotent legislation. Although we may feel as though the death of a dearly beloved relative has obscured the last ray of joy and hope, and overwhelming grief has fixed its poisoned fangs in the heart, and is thus withering all the pleasures and enjoyments of life, and casting a deeper shade over all its glooms, and we are left lonely and disconsolate in this "vale of tears;" yet we should receive sweet consolation from the positive assurance that the loved one has only exchanged the transient scenes and sufferings of time for the permanent joys and pleasures of eternal happiness. Every person who believes in the goodness of God, sincerely feels that all His dispensations are right; and though they may be to us incomprehensible, yet it is wrong in us to be afflicted because the will of God prevails. It is irreligious to yield to distress and affliction, because of any of the unavoidable results of the government of God. It is no indication of an unfeeling heart, or a want of the genuine emotions of real affection, to yield a willing obedience to the government of God. If one whom we dearly loved be removed from this world in obedience to the immutable laws by which God governs, so let it be; and if we truly loved our friend, we should not be distressed that he has exchanged earthly troubles for heavenly joys. The only

cause for which we have to mourn, is, when ourselves, or those we love, have not been "laying up treasures in heaven which are incorruptible;" but in accumulating earthly treasures which the "moth doth corrupt and the thief breaks through and steals."

But let us look after the youth with whom we started in life. We fear we have neglected him too long, for he is surrounded by many dangerous and captivating influences, and we fear the glittering phantom which promises him friends, position, and influence, and every thing which is enticing to the youthful mind, and panders to the animal propensities which are so vigorous in youth, has secured him as his victim. How can it be expected that the feeble powers of youth should be able to resist such temptations. He beholds the whole civilized world exclusively engaged in efforts to amass wealth, the wealthy laboring day and night, to add to their already excessive accumulations, the poor vainly struggling to secure the necessaries of life, yet all coveting the omnipotent dollar, all in the pursuit of wealth, none in the pursuit of true happiness. Society offers him nothing if he practice sterling virtue, every thing if he amass sordid wealth. There is scarcely a youth but who yields to the tempter, and before they have arrived at years of manhood, all are devoted worshipers at the shrine of the golden god.

We have neglected the happy youth thus long to observe the course of life into which he is directed by the will of God as expressed in the laws of nature, to notice the perfect adaptation of his natural endowments to the condition of these laws; and to point out the way by which he may escape pain and misery, and enjoy happiness. We will now look upon the course of life into which he is impelled by a false

social system. We have seen him in his youthful happiness. But time rolls on his ceaseless course. With the fleeting years have passed away the joyous period of youth, and now comes the anxious care-laden years of manhood. But why this change? Why is the happy, smiling, youthful face changed into the discontented care-worn countenance, which but too plainly tells a tale of incessant toil, and unceasing struggle? Why is not the whole day of human life as cloudless as its morning? Ah, the serpent of modern society has whispered in his ear the tempting offers of wealth; and when he looked forth upon society, he saw that those who were sincerely striving to pursue the course which is pointed out to them as the road to happiness, upon the chart of the journey of life contained in the system of nature, he saw these spurned from the higher circles of society, and submitting to the wrongs and oppressions of those who were traveling the high road to public favor, and worshiping devotedly at the shrine of the popular idol.

Then he spurned the offers of earthly and heavenly happiness, which his Creator had made to him upon the easy conditions of living in obedience to his laws, he forsook his God to seek the empty applause of society by gaining gold.

"Gold many hunted, sweat and bled for gold;
Walked all the night, and labored all the day,
And what was this allurement, dost thou ask?
A dust dug from the bowels of the earth,
Which being cast into the fire, came out
A shining thing that fools admired, and called
A god, and in devout and humble plight
Before it kneeled, the greater to the less.
And on its altar sacrificed ease, peace,
Truth, faith, integrity, good conscience, friends,
Love, charity, benevolence, and all

> The sweet and tender sympathies of life;
> And to complete the horrid murderous rite,
> And signalize their folly, offered up
> Their souls and an eternity of bliss,
> To gain them—what! an hour of dreamy joy;
> A feverish hour that hasted to be done,
> And ended in bitterness of woe."

But why this eager strife for gold? Why these years of painful labor? These sleepless nights, this life of anxious care and trouble? Has God required of man no other duty, is there naught else that is worthy of his effort, or are the conditions of his earthly existence so hard, that it requires all his energies, and every day and hour to procure those means which are essential to the enjoyments of life? No. A sufficiency to gratify every natural want is no part of his object; but to accumulate and hoard an excess, to defeat his own happiness by the anxieties and perplexities of excessive wealth, and that of others, by depriving them of a sufficiency to satisfy their actual necessities. Look forth upon the smiling earth, and see how bountifully the Creator has spread the tables of nature. He has made ample provision for all his creatures, and only requires that they should act in harmony with his laws, and in fellowship with themselves, in order to enjoy the gratification of every rational desire. He has spread out in broad extent the rich alluvial soil, and carpeted it with useful and delightful vegetation. He has planted in it the giants of the forests, and enriched its bowels with the minerals, to contribute to the enjoyments of his creatures. He has invested it with the capacities of production, and endowed his creatures with powers and faculties which enable them to cultivate it with pleasure. He exerts over them an ever-watchful care, and only requires that they shall properly use the means which he has placed within their reach, in order that every

living creature may enjoy the blessings of peace and plenty.

Did man but properly aim to do his duty, and to act in accordance with the will of his Creator, happiness would be the easiest and surest of human attainments. The earth is capable of abundantly sustaining at least five times the amount of population that has ever yet inhabited it at any one time, and yet a large proportion of those who dwell upon it are now actually suffering of want. The principal cause of this is, that human effort, as at present directed, has an immediate tendency to produce misery and suffering, instead of peace and plenty; and that man is not really in the pursuit of happiness, as the highest destiny of the human race, but he is exclusively engaged in the pursuit of wealth, and consequently he freely sacrifices the former in order to obtain the latter. The erroneous idea that happiness can be secured only by the possession of wealth, has gained the entire control of the public mind; whereas, of all the vices and follies which have ever cursed humanity, none have been more completely fatal to the enjoyment of happiness than the inordinate desire for wealth, which is engendered by this public sentiment.

Unless this false idea can be eradicated from the public mind, wide-spread human happiness is unattainable. This inordinate love of wealth, and the enjoyment of true happiness, can not possibly exist together. Neither can flourish, except by the destruction of the other. The present condition of man is an illustration of this fact. The love of wealth being the controlling sentiment of the age, he sacrifices every other interest to its gratification. He crowds into overgrown cities, and around the marts of commerce, until the occupations, by which

wealth is most ready obtained, are wrought in excess of the demand, and suffering and destitution ensue. He neglects the proper development of his moral and intellectual faculties, the only basis upon which permanent happiness can rest; and, devoting all his energies to the accumulation of wealth, he thus unduly develops the animal propensities of his nature, which has a tendency to destroy his rationality, and, not satisfied with a competency to gratify every natural want, he does not relax his efforts, or divert his attention from the great object of his life, until his increasing stores only add to his troubles, and detract from his enjoyments. Thus, while one portion of the human race is surfeiting in the luxuries, and suffering the miseries and troubles of excessive wealth, another portion is depriving themselves of the real comforts and enjoyments of life, so that they may become wealthy, and the remaining portion is toiling in penury, and suffering the miseries of almost utter destitution, which is the actual condition of man at the present time.

But, it may be said that it is an essential law of our nature that some persons will be successful in the struggles of life, while others will be unsuccessful, that their natural endowments will not enable them to contend successfully with their more favored brethren; and, therefore, this discrepancy in the condition of different persons is unavoidable, and if charitable aid should be extended to those who are thus unsuccessful, it would only be offering a reward for indolence and worthlessness. Wretchedness and destitution are the penalties with which nature punishes indolence, and we would not, by any means, relieve those who are suffering in consequence of the operation of this principle of nature, except by extending to them additional incentives to vir-

tuous action. Every person of sound mind and body, who refuses to comply with the law of nature, which demands the proper exercise of the mental and physical endowments, has no claim upon the aid or sympathy of society. All that society has to do with such persons is simply to leave them to the operation of nature, and they will be sufficiently punished.

But if the interests of society require the discouragement of indolence, it also demands the encouragement of virtuous effort. If those who are indolent should suffer, those who are willing to fulfill the requirements of nature, should receive their rewards in the enjoyments of all the essential comforts and conveniences of life. By making ample provision for all His creatures, the Creator has declared His will, that, by complying with the requirements of His established laws, every natural want shall be gratified. But how many thousands of human beings are this day toiling and striving, by honest effort, to obtain those necessaries, which are essential to the enjoyment of life, but in vain! How many thousands are there who are surfeiting in wasteful profusion, and thus add to the oppressions of the toiling millions, and themselves contribute nothing to the welfare of humanity. Is that the true system of society, which thus directly attempts to thwart the express will of God? Is He right, or is society wrong? There is an irreconcilable difference between them, one or the other demands reform—let man decide which it is.

Under the present constitution of society the less favored portion of humanity, is required to perform all the labor which produces the means of human existence, and after it is thus produced, it falls into the possession of the wealthy, and thus the producers

are deprived of many of the necessaries of life, while the drones of the human hive enjoy the benefits, which result from the labor of the working bees. There is this difference, however, between the human bee and the insect, that, while the latter expels the drones from the hive, the former elevates them to the highest position, and respects them most. Which acts the most rationally? The bee acts according to the laws of its Creator, man acts according to his own perverted conventionalities.

If God is just and reasonable, a greater moral work is required of the person upon whom is conferred superior intellectual and physical capacities. The Creator certainly did not endow particular individuals with extraordinary faculties and powers of mind and body merely to enable them to accomplish an extraordinary amount of wrong. He did not favor some persons more, and others less, merely to enable the strong to rob the feeble. It therefore appears conclusive, that to whom God has given much, of them much is required, not much wealth, but much virtuous effort and many good works among His less favored fellow-beings. But are the moral, social and religious systems of the 19th century, constituted in accordance with this beneficent requirement of the Divine will? Modern society is constituted, as though the Creator having made ample provision for the proper gratification of the natural wants of all His human creatures, has endowed some of them with superior faculties and powers for the express purpose of enabling them to obtain the possession of more of His bounties than can be of any real use to them, and deprive their less favored brothers and sisters of a sufficiency to satisfy the wants of nature. Great God! have mercy upon thy erring creatures here below.

He has the most independent income, who has the fewest demands for spending money. It is surprising how few are the natural wants of man and how infinite are his acquired wants. Natural wants are such as are essential to human existence, and contribute to the virtuous pleasures of the mind and body. Acquired wants are such as are formed by habit and by the perversion of the natural wants. The gratification of every natural want is rewarded by the enjoyment of health, vigor of mind and body, and by those substantial pleasures which ever attend the practice of virtue. The gratification of every acquired want is but a draft upon the capital means of our happiness, and consequently each successive draft only decreases that capital, and thus man becomes bankrupt so far as regards the enjoyments of this world, and passes to a future state of existence. He may not immediately feel the effects of the gratification of an unnatural or perverted desire, but each successive gratification has its pernicious effects upon the health and vigor of the mind and body, and their excessive gratification inevitably leads to misery, suffering and death. Many of those practices which are most gratifying to our perverted nature, are most repulsive to our unperverted nature.

Man is endowed with certain animal propensities, which the laws of his nature require should be carefully restrained. The unrestrained gratification of these propensities results in pernicious habits and a perversion of the natural wants. Their proper gratification is a source of virtuous pleasure, and leads to beneficial results, their perversion is a source of misery and leads to suffering and ruin. That is virtue; this is vice. Hence the restrained gratification

of the propensity for acquiring wealth is a virtue, but the perversion of this propensity by enlisting all the energies of life in the vain attempt to gratify it, is a vice. Every time we yield to an indulgence which is not required by the natural wants, we take one step toward the formation of an unnatural desire, and thus is formed an acquired taste which demands gratification, but which is feeble at first and easily resisted, but with each succeeding indulgence it gains strength, until by its excessive gratification the victim is involved in suffering and misery. In this way the natural wants of man are frequently perverted, and he ceases to derive pleasure from the most substantial enjoyments of life, and soon becomes, mentally and physically, imbecile. We see illustrations of this fact every day in the cigar-smoking, tobacco-chewing, whisky-drinking, nic-nac eating, fashion-aping shadows of humanity, of strong passions and feeble physical powers, who are tottering down to a premature death through a life of disease and suffering. How sternly does outraged nature vindicate her rights.

It would require but little effort upon the part of man to satisfy all the real wants of his physical nature, were his efforts directed properly to that purpose, and, instead of being an exhausting, toiling drudgery, which overtasks his physical, and prevents the proper development of his mental and moral powers, it would be a source of pleasure, affording delightful gratification to all the functional powers of the body; but, as it is now, one portion of humanity is suffering for the want of sufficient exercise, and the other is suffering from the effects of too much. In the present condition of man, at least three-fourths of all his physical efforts are required to pander to his acquired wants. Hence, he per-

forms four times the amount of physical labor which is really necessary to enable him to reach the highest attainable state of earthly happiness, while three parts of this labor, instead of advancing the interests and welfare of humanity, actually causes the miseries from which it is now suffering, by forming and gratifying those acquired wants which, as already shown, invariably lead to misery and suffering. How can the moralists and ministers of the present age expect to alleviate the sufferings of humanity, and expel vice, crime, and misery from the world, while they entirely neglect, or attempt to heal over without removing the disease of such a putrid ulcer upon the social body. We know that the moralizing and preaching of the present age is not properly directed, and almost entirely useless, from the fact that, although they are rapidly increasing, yet vice and folly are increasing in a still greater ratio; and this will continue to be so until man discovers the real cause of his misery and suffering, and earnestly seeks to remove it by the proper development of all the faculties and powers of his nature, and thus becomes a moral and rational being, instead of a mere animal.

This will take place just as soon as the three parts of his efforts which are now required to gratify his acquired wants, are devoted to the development of his moral sentiments and his intellect; and until this be done, man will not fulfill the designs of his creation, and must necessarily suffer and be miserable. One-fourth of man's time, with well directed effort, being required to provide for his natural wants, the remaining three-fourths should be devoted, not to the accumulation of unnecessary wealth, but to the development of his moral and intellectual nature, and to the discharge of those duties which are essential to the enjoyment of true happiness. What a change

would this effect in the condition of humanity! Whenever the moral sentiments and intellect of man shall be properly developed, and thus invested with control over his acts, vice and crime will be expelled from the world, and prisons transformed into temples of honest industry and usefulness.

But when we turn our thoughts from the beneficent designs of the creator, and reflect upon the perversions of misguided man, and behold the state of society by which we are surrounded, we are almost ready to conclude that human nature is inherently corrupt, and man irredeemably degenerated, and, consequently, give up all idea of reform while we retain the human attributes, and fix our goal of happiness beyond the shores of time. But if we study the plan of human nature, we distinctly perceive that the Creator has endowed man with all the natural qualities which are essential to his happiness in this life; and we believe that the fetters of his moral thralldom may yet be shaken off, and that he may be redeemed from the control of his perverted propensities, and attain true happiness by yielding obedience to the dictates of the higher motives of his nature. It is true that human effort, as at present directed, instead of subserving the true interests of man, defeats his own happiness by pandering to his acquired wants, and thus producing misery and suffering; that, instead of devoting one-fourth of his time to the production of the necessaries of life, and the remainder to the promotion of his social and moral condition, as the chief object of life, he devotes his whole life to the debasing and engrossing pursuit of wealth, and as long as the present false public sentiment controls the acts of man, and wealth retains its present power, he will madly offer up all his dearest interest at its polluted shrine; but man is

endowed with reason, he is at least capable of becoming a rational being; and when the frenzy of his avaricious passions shall have subsided, the eye of his reason may be unsealed, and he will at last be able to discover the true object of human existence. He will then be convinced that his acquired wants may become infinite, and that they are insatiable, and that all the accumulated wealth of the world would fail to satisfy them, and, consequently, he has the most independent income who has the fewest demands for spending money.

Man, viewed in a state of barbarism, presents a scene of violence and bloodshed. This is the natural result of barbarism, because those faculties which constitute man a rational being are permitted to remain almost entirely dormant, while almost unrestrained gratification is given to the animal propensities. Man, existing in the savage state, is a mere animal, and displays no more indications of rationality than does the beaver and other animals of the brute creation. The Esquimaux hut does not display more ingenuity than does that of the beaver, while all the arrangements of the Esquimaux for providing the comforts and enjoyments of life can scarcely be said to display equal intelligence with those of the beaver, and many other animals act with more rationality in providing the necessaries of life. But, as the moral and intellectual faculties of man are developed and brought into action by cultivation, he gradually displays indications of rationality, until at length, having ascended, step by step, through all the degrees and mutations of human condition, so far as man has yet advanced, he stands forth in all the grandeur and glory of civilized man.

How changed the scene. The dense forests and boundless wilds have been transformed into busy cities and beautiful farms. No longer the war-whoop resounds amid the primeval oaks, but in its stead is heard the terrific shriek of the steam messenger as it speeds on its swift course of social and commercial intercourse. Bands of industrious citizens have supplanted the hoards of painted savages, and perhaps upon the very spot where once stood the skin-covered hut, now rises the magnificent proportions of the stately mansion, or the less imposing but more cheerful cottage. Where but a few years ago were performed the orgies of savage superstition, now stands the noble church, consecrated to the worship of the God of nature. Comfort and enjoyment appears to crown the whole scene with peace and contentment.

Such is the external appearance of civilized man. Every thing which is essential to his happiness is easily to be obtained, and he is surrounded by the smiling scenes of nature, which should elicit the purest emotions and sentiments of his soul. What is to prevent him from being happy? To one who had not mingled in the troubled and muddied current of civilized society, it would appear as if the limits of the garden of paradise had become coëxtensive with the limits of civilization. Why has it not? Simply and only because man is still eating of the forbidden fruit every day of his life.

But let us descend from the observatory, from which we have viewed the happy appearances and external beauties of civilized man, and mingle a little in his society. But why this strife, this ceaseless contention; this deception, this wronging of each other, this madness and frenzy, as if each person were possessed of seven devils? Is the constitution

of nature such that man can not obtain the means which sustain his existence without defeating his happiness in the effort? No. Why, then, in the midst of this ample provision for the natural wants of all, do some persons amass more than they can use; and, after the most inveterate dog-in-the-manger manner, bark and growl to prevent others from using what they can not? Why does not civilized man, who boasts of his superior rationality, acquire a sufficiency to gratify every real want, and leave the balance to those who need it, and not make life one continual struggle of toil and suffering, and deprive himself of most of the substantial enjoyments of life, for the purpose of amassing what he can not use, and which only adds to his trouble and discontent? Why is his spirit so oppressed and burdened with care and trouble, amid so many smiling scenes, and while his Creator has spread out before him so profusely so many sources of pleasure, and placed all the essential means of his happiness within his reach, why is there so much suffering, misery, and woe?

Simply because a false public sentiment and a perverted civilization bestow favors, respect, and position upon those who possess

> "A dust dug from the bowels of the earth,
> Which, being cast into the fire, came out
> A shining thing that fools admired, and called
> A god:"

and deny them to those who, by yielding obedience to the requirements of the God of nature, have failed to receive the favors of this god of civilized society. Alas, unhappy man! benighted amid all the light of his boasted civilization, he imagines that he sees the brightest rays of happiness gleaming

through the glitter of wealth and gold, and performs, with a zeal worthy of a better cause, all the cruel rites of the fickle god; and, in order to serve it with more devotion,

> "On its altar sacrificed ease, peace,
> Truth, faith, integrity, good conscience, friends,
> Love, charity, benevolence, and all
> The sweet and tender sympathies of life."

How unfortunate it is that scenes so glorious as the creations of God, and so capable of yielding the sweetest enjoyments of life, should be polluted by such a turbid stream of human folly.

The retrospect of civilization presents the discouraging fact, that as man has progressed from a state of barbarism, and become civilized, his money-seeking propensities has increased, and the most enlightened nations upon the earth, present this day the melancholy spectacle, of being those in which wealth is sought with the most engrossing avidity, and in which it is invested with the most crushing power, and inflicts upon humanity the most withering curses. Is it the sole object of civilization to enable man to hoard up wealth? Is the condition of man to be considered the more elevated, the nearer he becomes a mere money-bag? Can it not be so arranged, that as he advances in civilization he shall be taught some thing else beside the rules of percentage, and that he has other duties to discharge beside that of accumulating useless wealth; or can not he advance from the savage state without defeating the scheme of his true happiness at every step? Can not he become civilized without becoming the slave of wealth, or must civilization necessarily invest wealth with a power which crushes the best interests of humanity?

But the same cause has perverted civilization which

has perverted every other social institution of the age, and so far from being inherent in it, it is only the result of the imperfect state of human development, and of the ignorance of man of the real conditions of his true happiness. The inborn desire for action which pervades human nature, urges man into the field of action, while his vanity and ambition urge him to pursue that course of action which yields them the greatest gratification, and as these controling impulses can not be so effectually gratified in any other way in the present state of civilization, as by the possession of wealth, the whole civilized world is thus forced into the ruinous struggle for wealth, it engrosses human effort, and, consequently, all those nobler purposes which alone contribute to the true and substantial advancement of human condition are neglected, or sacrificed, to its attainment.

But how is this to be prevented? Simply, by the only means by which substantial reform can ever be effected, by making sterling virtue the test of character, the basis of respectability, and the source of promotion in society, instead of wealth, and then the native vanity and ambition of man could be as fully gratified by the practice of virtue, as it now is by the possession of wealth; and, consequently, wealth would lose its crushing power in society, and virtue assume its proper control over human conduct, and a virtuous character would then be as great an object of human attainment as the possession of wealth is now. Then would human progress be placed upon a permanent basis, and unfurling its banners in every clime, and among every people, it would move forward with accelerated speed, and civilized man, no longer exclusively engaged in pursuit of wealth, would seek the road to happiness, agreeably to the

designs of his Creator, as revealed in the works of nature.

The citizens of our own country are the freest people upon the face of the earth. Other nations claim to have ascended higher in the scale of civilization; but among no people have its advantages been so universally enjoyed as among our own. While a few of the favored caste, in different nations of Europe, have, perhaps, arrived at a higher state of education and refinement, than have yet been attained in this country, yet the great mass of the people of every European nation are ignorant, oppressed, and degraded. Here every citizen is truly a sovereign, and all the advantages of our free government are equally shared by all. From the days in which the republics of ancient Greece and Rome shone forth so gloriously amid the despotisms and darkness by which they were surrounded, until our own happy and successful solution of the great question of man's capacity for self-government, no nation, past or present, has so successfully and universally enjoyed the advantages and blessings of the democratic form of government.

Here every citizen has a voice in the formation of the institutions by which he is to be governed. Here no exclusive caste, sustained by a powerful standing army, usurps the reins of government, and drives its crushing weight over the oppressed masses, in violation of every human right, thus elevating the few by reducing the many to hopeless servitude and degradation. Here no titled aristocracy holds the real property of the country from age to age, thus depriving the mass of the people of the indispensable means of comfortable subsistence. But what follows from all this? It follows conclusively, that as the powers

of government are thus either directly or indirectly placed in the hands of the people, that the people must be capable of exercising these high privileges in such a manner as will perpetuate those free institutions. If there is any one fact which the history of man has unquestionably settled, it is, that free institutions can not exist, except upon the basis of public and private virtue and morality, and the general intelligence of the people. This is not only a point settled in history, but it is also an immutable law of nature.

Hence every cause which has a tendency to corrupt the virtue of a people, has a direct tendency to disqualify them for the enjoyment of free institutions. History demonstrates the fact beyond a doubt, that excessive wealth is the great operative cause which debases and corrupts the public and private virtue of a nation, and thus leads directly to its downfall. It can be easily shown that no great nation of people has ever yet been swept from independent existence, until its public spirit and energy have been corrupted and enervated by the excessive abundance of wealth, and the tottering fabric, undermined by vice and corruption, has been easily overthrown by its more virtuous and enterprising neighbors. True public spirit and virtue lead to the accession of national power; great national power produces the concentration of wealth, and excessive wealth corrupts public spirit and virtue, and then the national power, without an adequate force to sustain it, passes away. Thus nations rise and fall. The influx of excessive wealth invariably destroys public virtue, and soon the public spirit of the nation is drowned in the corrupting streams of luxury and indolence, and it ingloriously sinks into the grave of nations.

If these premises be true, have we, as a nation, no

cause for fear? We have a just cause to be proud of our national position. Our political sun is soaring in unrivalled brightness and power amid the galaxy of nations: no cloud is lowering upon the political horizon to obscure its splendor, and the stars and stripes are unfurled upon every sea and in every clime, the proud emblem of liberty, triumphantly asserting man's capacity for self-government. But in the full tide of our prosperity, are we not sowing the seeds of our ultimate ruin? If popular virtue is essential to the existence of republican institutions, and the accumulation of excessive wealth is the operative cause which dissipates and corrupts popular virtue, are we fostering that sterling virtue and vigorous public spirit which constitute the bulwarks of our free nationality, and which will perpetuate our free institutions from generation to generation?

Learned philosophers have said that war is not an unmitigated evil, because it awakens the public spirit of the nation, and diverts the attention of the citizens from the engrossing pursuit of wealth, and arouses them from indulgence in luxury and indolence, and thus stems the current of enervating and corrupting vices and follies, which, in times of uninterrupted prosperity, are generally maturing into the fruits which will eventually cause their ruin. The effect of excessive wealth upon individuals and nations is not materially different. Under its influence neither can long be truly virtuous. As with persons, so with nations, a certain amount of wealth is essential to national power and prosperity, and that amount is merely a sufficiency to supply the actual necessities of the nation; and let it always be remembered that national liberty never has, nor never can be achieved or sustained, by wealth, but only by the virtue and patriotism of the citizens. Excessive

individual wealth does not more certainly lead to individual effeminacy, than does excessive national wealth lead to national effeminacy, and, consequently, to the dissipation of public spirit.

A nation's prosperity and power, therefore, does not always increase with the amount of its wealth, but, on the contrary, we have only to review the history of nations to ascertain the fact that the period of a nation's glory and prosperity are invariably the days of its honest poverty and moderate wealth, while the period of its decline and fall are the days of its excessive wealth. Among all the great nations that have arisen, flourished, and passed away, there is not a single exception to this general rule. The ancient republics of Greece and Rome flourished and strengthened into irresistible power during the days of their uncorrupted virtue; but, as soon as a perennial stream of wealth poured in upon them, in consequence of this power, from all their tributaries, it corrupted and dissipated the public spirit and energies of the people, and while they were intent only upon public fetes and shows, and indulging in luxury and vice, their oppressors easily fixed upon them permanently the shackles of servitude. It is an established principle in the economy of nature, to prevent the ruinous oppressions and evils of universal empire, that when a national power attains that irresistible strength, which would enable it to swallow up every other body politic, that the corrupting streams of wealth which flow into it, as the natural result of that power, corrupt and dissipate the virtue and energy of the people, until they become unable to sustain the weight of the colossal fabric, and, consequently, dismemberment occurs, and its constituent parts are reörganized into new political systems,

relieved from the destructive influence of the concentration of wealth.

Had the ancient Romans retained the sterling valor and patriotism which enabled their victorious legions to plant the Roman eagle upon the fairest portions of the earth, the combined powers of the world would have been unable to resist their power, and universal empire must have been their destiny; but, after the wealth of the world had been made contributary to Rome, even the power of the Eternal City yielded to its destroying agency. And such are the teachings of history in regard to other nations.

Accepting this, then, as an established principle, are our tendencies as a nation such as will strengthen and perpetuate our free institutions? Among all the nations of the earth there is no other in which wealth is sought by the entire people with such engrossing avidity as in our own. We are in the midst of a commercial struggle which is enlisting all the thoughts, hopes, and energies of our entire people. We are absolutely running mad in the pursuit of wealth. We recklessly stake our happiness for life upon the result of a single desperate speculation. Most of our regular business occupations are only systematic gambling, so uncertain and desperate has become the struggle. There is scarcely any one but whose sole object is to become wealthy, and base intrigues and dishonest artifices have become the common conduct of life. The most reckless gambling, with all its consequent vices and miseries, is alarmingly on the increase in all our larger cities. All the means by which money can be obtained are resorted to without regard to honesty or charity. Swindling, cheating and deceiving, are the regular

business occupations of a large proportion of our city population. Robberies abound, and murders for money are of frequent occurrence. The man of wealth has to guard his slippery treasures with fire-arms and bludgeons, as vigilantly as though he were surrounded by the Bedouins of the desert. Policemen, criminal laws, and penitentiaries, can not deter men from making a reckless grab at the almighty dollar. The virtue and morality of a large portion of our citizens are literally sold out and delivered over to the power of wealth. We are now in the midst of the mature manhood of our national existence; and the agencies are at work among us which, unless they are counteracted, will soon destroy the sterling qualities of our energetic people, and produce mortal disease in the body politic. We are great and prosperous now; but so were once Greece and Rome. At the very time that they stood most proudly upon the summit of national power, and felt most secure, the mortal enemy of national greatness was insidiously corrupting those sterling qualities of Roman and Grecian virtue, which had reared those mighty fabrics, and which alone could sustain them. They fell. Shall we heed the lesson, or shall we rush on impetuously, until, like them, our national existence is blotted out from among the nations?

It is true that this universal struggle is developing the resources of our country, but these resources may be developed in harmony with national safety and permanent prosperity; and it will be well to recollect that excessive wealth has never been divested of that corrupting influence which destroyed the strength and glory of the nations of antiquity, and that we are still subject to the same operations of cause and effect, which hurried them to their ruin. Now, this universal and continual effort to produce

wealth, must result in the accumulation of excessive personal and national wealth, and this will corrupt and dissipate the virtue and public spirit of the people, and finally render them incapable of preserving and perpetuating our free institutions, or there is no truth in the teachings of history, or certainty in the operation of the laws of nature.

But of all the efforts which are made to justify the exclusive pursuit of wealth, and clothe it in the garbs of virtue, no excuse answers its purpose so well, and seems to transform the very wrongs and dishonest artifices which are resorted to, into pure and commendable motives, as that of making pecuniary provision for children. The idea that a child's happiness and future prospects in the world depend upon the amount of wealth which its parents will be able to leave it, at their death, seems to have taken entire possession of the human mind. Hence, all orders of society are engaged in a desperate strife to amass wealth for this special purpose, and all seem to think that the object of life has failed, and their unfortunate children are doomed to a life of toil and disgrace, if they are not able to bestow upon them a sufficient amount of wealth to enable them to defeat their own happiness, and the designs of God, by leading a life of idle worthlessness and vice, instead of devoting the energies, with which they are endowed, to honest effort, and thus securing their own virtuous enjoyment, and contributing to the general welfare of mankind.

The religious denominations of the present day have almost entirely ceased, even to seriously attempt to divert the attention of their professing members from the practice of this popular vice,

which is defiling the purity of religion; and hence, our religion consists too much in empty words and loud profession, while our real acts and earnest endeavors are devoted to the accumulation of wealth. It is a melancholy fact that those who make the loudest professions of religion, are generally those who are devoting their efforts most exclusively to the accumulation of wealth, and they suppose that the discrepancies between their professions and their practice will be reconciled, and all the crooked ways in their conduct made straight by the very commendable object which they have in view, that of making provision for their children. According to the predominant religion of the age, the pursuit of wealth and the practice of pious virtue, consist in the same thing, or rather religion has assimilated itself to the practices of money-getting, and they now walk hand in hand in mutual confidence and friendship, the former sanctifying, by its holy name, the unholy acts of the latter, and it seems to be supposed that the follies and errors of the age have effected mutations in eternal and immutable principles, until religion has thus been metamorphosed into the handmaid of avarice and money-grubbing.

Undoubtedly one of the most difficult and important class of duties which parents are required to perform, is that of making the proper provision for the welfare and happiness of their children. The Creator has placed them helplessly in their hands, capable of being molded into almost any moral shape, and of receiving that direction in the commencement of the journey of life, which they are afterward to pursue, while he has placed within the bosom of the parents a steadfast love for their offspring, which the roughest surges of fortune can not move. But as the manner in which these duties are

to be discharged depends entirely upon the discretion of the parent, the justice of the Creator requires that the parents should be held responsible for the manner in which these high privileges are exercised. What a fearful responsibility is thus resting upon parents, and how carefully should they investigate and weigh every principle and motive which can aid them in the proper discharge of the most sacred and important duties which they owe to their God, to their children, to themselves, and to humanity.

Without entering upon the general discussion of these important duties, let us consider briefly the duty of parents to make pecuniary provision for their children. In the first place, it is their duty to endeavor to make this provision, so far as wealth may be considered as the necessary means which sustains human existence, and contributes to its legitimate pleasures and enjoyments, and also, so far as it may be the means of aiding their children in the discharge of the esssential duties of life; that is, it will be of advantage to a young person to receive from his parents a moderate portion of those means which are essential to life, not because he may not earn them himself, nor because they will enable him more readily to acquire wealth, but because it will then require less time to obtain these necessaries, and thus enable him to devote more time in early life to the investigation of the natural conditions of his existence, and to the proper development of his moral and intellectual faculties, which are indispensable to his happiness and enjoyment, both in his animal and rational capacities, and which alone can enable him to attain the highest state of being.

But certainly nothing can be more contrary to the designs of the Creator as revealed by nature and by

scripture, than for the father to devote his whole life to the accumulation of wealth, for the purpose of bestowing it upon the child; for the father defeats his own happiness by the over-exertion of one class of faculties, and that the lowest of his nature, while the higher class of his faculties, that is, the moral and intellectual, remain inactive, and thus the scheme of human nature is completely inverted, the animal, or selfish faculties predominating instead of the moral and intellectual. But by this means, wealth is obtained and bestowed upon the child, who thus being relieved of the necessity of virtuous effort, is either forced by the energies of his nature, which demand action, into the practices of vice and folly, or his education having taught him but one principle, and that the supreme importance of wealth, his whole attention is absorbed in its engrossing pursuit, and it matters not which of these directions he takes, the design of his existence is defeated. It is very generally the case, that the father defeats his own happiness in order to amass wealth, to enable his son to defeat his happiness, in order to spend it.

What can amount to more consummate folly. It really seems as if man had designedly set himself to work to pervert all the faculties with which he is endowed, and to employ them for the express purpose of entailing upon himself the most withering curses. The annals of savage life record practices upon which civilized man reflects with horror and disgust, and every age of human existence reveals habits and delusions which animal instinct can never equal, and which the most grossly perverted rationality only can achieve; but among all the absurd practices and follies of barbarism, and all the delusions and errors of heathenism, none are more fatal to the true interest of man, or more effectually prevent him

from attaining his proper state of being, than the all absorbing passion for wealth which now controls human conduct throughout the civilized world.

Were we to judge, from the conduct of civilized man, we might be lead to conclude that he is an animal endowed with propensities for hoarding wealth, and that his superiority over the lower animals consists principally in this: that by the perversion of the faculties of his rationality, he is enabled to accumulate wealth more successfully than they. Disregarding all the delightful enjoyments of a life spent in accordance with the requirements of our nature, he immures himself in the dark prison-house of his counting-room, where, amid dry goods and groceries, day books and ledgers, bills-receivable and bills-payable, his whole life is one continual routine of anxiety and solicitude, and where, by driving trades of questionable veracity, he heaps together piles of sordid gold. This debasing passion for wealth, frequently produces such monster offspring in human shape, that they would barter with the devil himself, and traffic human happiness for misery and woe, provided that thereby they could obtain the coveted gold.

If we divest ourselves of the prejudices and opinions which a false education has so permanently fixed in our minds, that we never entertain a doubt of their correctness, and reflect that man is endowed with reason, and capable of investigating and ascertaining the laws of his own nature, and their relation to external objects, that God created him in his own image, upright and without sin, and implanted in his mind moral attributes, and bestowed as the reward of their exercise, the purest and most substantial enjoyments of life, in short, that man is endowed with every attribute which is essential to

the enjoyment of universal happiness: when we thus reflect, and then consider the condition of man, after he has had sixty centuries in which to investigate and ascertain the conditions of his earthly existence, we find him systematically adopting that course of action which necessarily produces misery, and obstinately refusing to comply with the conditions upon which his Creator has offered him substantial happiness as a human being; perverting the noblest faculties of his rationality, and arousing into intense activity the animal propensities of his nature, by the exclusive pursuit of wealth; when we consider all these things, we can only ask, why is it, that while man is thus endowed, he acts thus? It is, because man is both a rational being and an animal; if he is controlled by his rational sentiments, his animal propensities only perform their proper subordinate functions, and he seeks and enjoys true happiness; but if he is controlled by his animal propensities, he seeks the gratification of his animal nature, while his rationality is either perverted or remains dormant; but as he is controlled by his rational or animal nature, according as their faculties are developed into strength and activity, and as the pursuit which engages his attention and controls his action in the present age, only perverts the sentiments of his rationality and arouses into action and strength the propensities of his animal nature; he is, therefore, controlled by these propensities, and hence results, in a great degree, the misery and unhappiness which he at present suffers. But, if you would know the popular reason why man acts thus, you must be informed, that he is merely engaged in the laudable employment of making pecuniary provision for his children.

Who can, without sorrowful and solemn feelings,

look upon the broad possessions of him who has faithfully devoted his life to the accumulation of wealth, but who has now been called to give an account of his earthly stewardship before that judgment bar where wealth is not the dispenser of favors, nor obtains for its possessor a respectable position in society? Who can reflect, without a shudder, that to amass these earthly possessions, an immortal being has deprived himself of all the sweetest pleasures and enjoyments of time, and the soul has now winged its flight to that eternal home where the earthly acts and deeds by which they were obtained, will again blast the pleasures and enjoyments of eternity? Think you that the soul of that man who has spent his life in acquiring these possessions, when it appears in the presence of its Maker, will dare to justify his earthly conduct, by the excuse that all this was done in order to make provision for his children?

Now let us look at the provision which is thus made for children. They have been provided with an education which teaches them the supreme importance of wealth, and the utter unworthiness of man without it, and, consequently, they worship wealth, even if it be found in close relationship with rascality, and scorn honest poverty, although it be associated with the purest piety and virtue; and they have been provided with sentiments and views of life which teach them that honest effort, such as their Creator requires of them, is disgraceful to a respectable person, but that the wild and dishonest schemes of respectable gambling and speculation, by which our moneyed aristocracy obtain their ill-gotten gains, are the only occupations which are worthy of the attention of those who expect to circulate at par in our "best society."

They are also provided with habits and notions which render them thoroughly worthless, as far as regards the most essential duties of life, and which hurry them into practices of vice and dissipation, and then, added to all these inestimable legacies, in order to complete their felicity, and secure their happiness beyond all emergency, they are provided with wealth. Does not the folly of man amount to infatuation, when he devotes all the best energies of his life exclusively to the accumulation of wealth, and with an application so intense that he not only deprives himself of its best enjoyments and induces suffering and misery in their stead, but he also thus, very generally, shortens the period of its existence; and he does all this in order to make that provision for his children which so effectually defeats all the aims and designs of human existence, and renders them drones in the great hive of human industry. Thus, when man has finished the course of life, he has effectually defeated his own happiness, and damned his own soul, in order to make that provision which shall effectually defeat the happiness and damn the soul of the child. If these were the unavoidable results of the superior intelligence of man, the conclusion would be forced upon us that he is endowed with extraordinary faculties only to enable him to curse himself in an extraordinary manner, for no animal, which is not endowed with the faculties of rationality, can ever be guilty of that degree of vice and folly which has such a pernicious influence upon its welfare.

Some one having remarked, in the presence of Lord Erskine, that a certain person had died, worth a million of pounds, his lordship, in his usual, quiet, satirical manner, remarked, "what a handsome sum to commence the next world with." Civilized man

presents the singular aspect of rational beings who believe in a future state of existence, and that moral preparation in this life is essential to its enjoyment, yet who, by devoting their energies almost entirely to the accumulation of the treasures of this world, effectually defeat this necessary preparation, thus condemning themselves by confessing its necessity, yet pursuing that course of life which most certainly prevents it.

Such is the provision which the civilization of the present age teaches man to make for his children. It is the poisoned drop which is blighting the sweetest fruits of human happiness, and diffusing its virus throughout the social systems of the entire civilized world. Is the moral nature of man so debased by this sordid current, which follows in the wake of civilization, that it can not be redeemed by the proper development of those noble qualities of the human mind, which alone can achieve the true destiny of man, and form the only substantial basis upon which a true progressive civilization can rest? Perhaps the most efficient means of establishing true human progress, is the inborn love and attachment which man feels for his offspring. This is the powerful motive which controls his conduct, and directs his efforts. When this natural desire of man to secure the welfare and happiness of his child shall be directed by a properly-developed moral and intellectual nature, and he correctly understands the nature of the duties which he owes to his child, then will his most sincere and earnest endeavors to benefit the child cease to be transformed by the blighting touch of folly and error, into the real causes which defeat the enjoyment of true happiness. He will then be convinced that his Creator requires of him the discharge of other duties toward his child, beside

devoting the energies of his whole life to the accumulation of superfluous wealth, to corrupt and pervert its youthful nature; and, also, that the Creator and modern society have entirely different rules by which to estimate the value of dollars and cents, and that his rules are to be definitely ascertained by investigating the system of nature, and that the problem of human happiness can only be solved by working according to the rules which are there taught.

He will then discover that the inheritance of earthly wealth, is not essential to the welfare or happiness of his child, but that a rich legacy of moral and intellectual wealth, consisting in the proper discipline and development of all the faculties of the mind, is the only provision which a father can make for a child, and thereby certainly secure its future welfare and happiness. How happy would life be spent in the faithful discharge of all its essential duties, spent in molding the plastic faculties of the infant mind into that shape which is to decide its destiny in time and in eternity, and when the the parent had fought the good fight, had finished his course, and was ready to receive the crown of righteousness, how sweet would be the consolation, in the hour of death, that he had bequeathed an inheritance to his children, which would secure to them earthly happiness, amid all the trials and troubles of time, and eternal happiness beyond its shores.

Man is not endowed with any faculty which is not essential to his happiness, neither is he endowed with any faculty, but which, being abused or perverted, will produce misery and suffering. God has not

created even the minutest object without its necessity to the fulfillment of some definite purpose, which is essential to the enjoyment of his creatures, much less has he endowed man with those superior mental faculties, which alone constitute the only important distinction between him and the lower animals, without each distinct faculty having an agency to perform, which is essential to his welfare; and hence, it follows conclusively that man can attain true happiness only by the harmonious exercise and development of all the faculties of his mind, and that the excessive development of any particular order of faculties, while the proper gratification of others is neglected, must necessarily destroy the equilibrium in which God has poised the scheme of human happiness. Man being a rational being, it is certain that, in order to attain happiness, his moral and intellectual sentiments must be maintained, by proper development in their natural supremacy, over his animal propensities; but if by the neglect of the proper moral development, and by the intense exercise of his selfish or animal propensities, this order of nature is reversed, it is clear that the rationality of man is virtually destroyed, and this being in gross violation of the laws of his being, wretchedness and misery must consequently ensue.

Now, the pursuit of wealth only exercises and develops a single order of faculties, consequently, life must necessarily be miserable if devoted exclusively to the pursuit of wealth. Man is thus virtually transformed into a being endowed with a single order of faculties, instead of one endowed with so many varied faculties, which being properly gratified and developed, become so many different sources of pleasure. But this is not its worst feature. The undue development and activity of the lower facul-

ties or propensities are much more productive of misery, than the exclusive development of the higher faculties. It has a tendency to destroy all the nobler motives of his moral nature, and instead of being urged by his higher rational endowments to seek a more perfect state of being, he yields to the impulses of his selfish propensities, which not only defeat his own happiness, but also cause him to engage in efforts which have a tendency to destroy the happiness of others, in the vain attempt to obtain the means to gratify his perverted propensities.

Hence, the controlling sentiment of the age, which has a tendency quite irresistible to force every member of the community into the engrossing pursuit of wealth, as the exclusive employment of life, produces a double harvest of wretchedness and misery; first, by the undue exercise of particular faculties of the mind; and secondly, by those faculties being the lower faculties of his nature. It is, therefore, impossible that the pursuit of wealth, while it is made the sovereign object of life, as at present, can be made the basis of any substantial and efficient moral regeneration, or to conduce to the formation of sterling moral sentiments in the human mind. As long as wealth is invested with supreme power in society, and for this reason monopolizes human effort, it will arouse and develop into controlling action only the most selfish and debasing propensities of human nature.

If any should think that this is mere idle theory, let us refer them to its practical effects upon the condition of man. Let us refer them to the fact, that amid the gay revelry of excessive wealth abounds the suffering of squalid penury; that amid the overflowing granaries of wasteful abundance, unfortunate human beings suffer and die of utter want and

neglect; that millions of professing christians, surfeiting in superfluous abundance, cling to their useless wealth more like a devil than a christian, and even exert every effort to accumulate more than they can use, and deprive others of it who are suffering for its want; and then hypocritically address their prayers to heaven, while they are surrounded by hungry orphan children, distressed mothers and widows, and unfortunate fellow-beings, all suffering of utter want, and to whom the smallest portion of their superfluity would bring gladness and comfort; yet they act as though the christian religion consisted in praying like a saint and acting like a devil; and let us refer them to the fact, that the star of human progress is wading through oceans of human blood; and that the rejoicing of civilized man is continually mingling with the wailings of suffering humanity.

Why is this? Is it because God has doomed man to unavoidable misery? Is human suffering the necessary result of the works of God, or is it the unnecessary result of human conduct? All this is because the exclusive pursuit of wealth perverts the rationality of man, and develops his selfish or animal propensities into controlling activity; and thus his conduct is controlled by his animal nature, rather than by his moral or rational nature; and as the master brute, by means of his greater strength, drives the less favored animal away from its last morsel of food, and gorges his stomach to that extent which causes him to suffer misery, even though his fellow brute should suffer for the want of it; so the human animal, (we can not help it,) by means of his greater mental and physical strength, accumulates useless wealth, and often deprives his less favored fellow-being of his last means of comfortable existence, only to over-gorge himself with wealth, which certainly

can not add to his own happiness; and like the ox, he slobbers over and wastes what he can not use, and drives away his poor starving comrades, and with just about as much sympathy for their sufferings.

Nothing is more frequently proved by the experience of real life, than the utter incapacity of excessive wealth to confer upon its possessor the substantial enjoyments of true happiness, and the only pleasures which it affords, consist in the gratification of acquired wants, which are always armed with the stings of misery and suffering. We almost always find anxiety and peace-destroying care and solicitude associated with excessive wealth. These are its inseparable companions; they steal into its downy beds; its rich mansions and palaces; and wherever wealth spreads its illusory pleasures, there they hold their revels. Thank God, man is endowed with nobler attributes than to be rendered permanently happy by the gratification of such base and sordid passions. He can enjoy true happiness only as the reward of the harmonious gratification and development of all the faculties and sentiments of his mind.

In penning the foregoing reflections, we have been obliged to represent the present state of society in a light which we could have sincerely wished to avoid, but we have been conducted to these conclusions by principles and facts which we believed to be founded in truth, and which, therefore, the smiles or frowns of men could not induce us to knowingly conceal or misrepresent. The very fountains of human happiness are poisoned by the perverted passions and propensities of human nature. True virtue consists in the proper gratification of every faculty and sentiment with which God has endowed human nature, and this only can confer the real

pleasures and enjoyments of life, unembittered by the trials and sufferings which afflict humanity, and which result entirely from the improper gratification of natural endowments.

Far, indeed, has man departed from this path. In the dark ages of his existence, he has been controlled by more blood-thirsty and savage passions, but in no period of receding time, has the human mind been controlled by a passion which exerts a more corrupting influence over the purest and noblest emotions and sentiments of the human soul, than that from which he is suffering at present. It is true, that civilization has much elevated the condition of man, but it is also true, that as it has conferred upon him many blessings which were unknown to him in his savage state, it has also brought upon him many curses, which he knew not there. The lower grades of human beings who burrow in the filthy abodes of poverty, in those places where civilization has made its farthest advance, have reached a lower degree of misery and degradation, than has yet been reached by the savage man, when uncontaminated by the vices of civilization. But it is not the necessary result of civilization, that it should bring these withering curses upon a large portion of its subjects; but it is, because it is practically wedded to an unholy and debasing passion, and this result is the monster offspring.

But, while most persons will, perhaps, freely acknowledge that the social systems of the age are corrupted and perverted by the undue influence of wealth, all will anxiously inquire, how is society to be redeemed from this servitude, and how are the consequent evils to be averted? The means by which this social revolution is to be effected have been repeatedly indicated in the preceding pages; a revolution

unstained by human blood, and from which will result to mankind more permanent benefits than have resulted from all the sanguinary political revolutions, which have ever been effected by means of the sword and bayonet. That power is true virtue and morality, founded upon the basis of human nature, with all its natural attributes properly developed, and each one performing its proper functions in the control of human conduct. The utter failure of the existing moral and religious systems to redeem man from the control of his perverted propensities, and to bring into controlling action his moral sentiments, proves conclusively that these systems are not adapted to the system of human nature. They have failed, because the real nature of the faculties and powers of the human mind are not understood, and while the mental exercises and efforts of man, which alone develop his faculties, are such as bring into controlling action only his propensities, and pervert his moral nature, they attempt to counteract the effects which follow, by mere talking and preaching, thus attempting to prevent an effect without removing the cause. Hence man can never become a truly moral and virtuous being under the influences which at present prevail.

Many sincere and excellent persons maintain that the inherent frailty and depravity of human nature will for ever prevent the mass of mankind from attaining that state of exalted virtue and morality which it is the object of this work to demonstrate—that the natural endowments of man, if properly cultivated, will enable him to reach. And, indeed, the retrospect of human action, as it has been displayed in all ages of the world, and also his present condition would seem to establish this discouraging conclusion. But this view is certainly erroneous. As already

shown, if man be inherently and necessarily depraved, we can not avoid attributing malevolent designs to his Creator. But if we form a more intimate acquaintance with man himself, and thus ascertain the real nature and designs of his natural attributes, we shall find they are perfectly adapted to the conditions of his earthly situation, and all that he has to do to avoid misery and suffering, and enjoy happiness, is to comply with these conditions, which he may easily do; then, if we consider the manner in which he has violated the conditions of nature, and perverted and abused his own attributes, we shall be at no loss to account for the suffering and depravity of mankind. Hence human depravity is not an inherent quality of human nature, but results entirely from human conduct; and, therefore, all that man has to do to overcome this depravity is to conform his conduct to the requirements of his nature.

When we thus arrive at a correct and complete understanding of human nature, and then study the history of man's acts, we discover that he has, in all ages, been engaged in continual efforts to defeat the designs of his own creation, and it amounts to precisely this, that man has been in a state of warfare with his Creator during the whole period of human existence, and the first act of hostilities was committed upon the part of man, when he ate of the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden, and every vicious and immoral act that he has since committed has been an act of hostility upon the part of man. But this warfare has raged, with more or less violence, in different periods of time, according as the acts of man have been more or less vicious, and the desolations of Nineveh, of Babylon, of Tyre, and all those fallen places whose ruins indicate the last degree of human

depravity, only mark the battle-fields upon which the opposing parties have tried their strength in this struggle of six thousand years' duration.

Alas, how fatally has the struggle resulted with man. All his earthly suffering and misery are the fruits of his defeat. Yet there is no vindictiveness upon the part of his Creator, He established the laws of nature when He laid the foundations of the heavens and the earth; if man obey them he is happy, if he violate them he is miserable; he is a rational being and a free agent; he can ascertain these laws, and shape his own conduct. But this ruinous struggle must continue as long as man is ignorant of his own nature, and ignorantly or wilfully violates the laws which govern him, as a natural being, and considers their regular and fearful operations as the mysterious and inscrutable dispensations of Providence.

Nothing can be more obvious than the cause of human suffering and misery, and also their remedy, if we properly investigate the attributes of human nature, and also their relation to external objects and circumstances. We shall discover that misery and suffering result from the natural laws, which govern these attributes, operating upon the circumstances and conditions which are produced by human conduct. For instance, if a person devote all his energies to the accumulation of wealth, or any other vicious course of life, this is not the result of any natural law, or other divine institution, but it is a circumstance or condition which is produced entirely by the conduct of that person, and being in violation of the laws which govern human nature, the suffering and misery which ensue are the effects of the natural laws operating upon these circumstances. Now, as these circumstances and conditions are produced

by human action, it is evident, that if man act contrary to the requirements of his nature, he will be miserable; but if he act in accordance with them, he will be happy, and hence the harmonious gratification and development of all the faculties of the mind, the moral and intellectual sentiments maintaining their natural supremacy over the animal propensities, are the only means by which permanent happiness can be enjoyed.

Let us now apply these general principles to the particular evils resulting from the exclusive pursuit of wealth. We have shown that it brings into undue action the mere propensities of our nature, and perverts the moral and intellectual sentiments, which reverses the scheme of nature, and therefore must, necessarily, defeat our happiness, and cause misery and suffering. But as the means which constitute wealth are essential to the existence of civilized society and to the enjoyment of life, how are we to enjoy these blessings, and yet avoid the evils which result from its exclusive pursuit and excessive accumulation? Can we not enjoy its uses without incurring its abuses? This certainly can be done, but it can be done only by divesting wealth of the undue power which it exercises in society. Man must have some other mode of gratifying the native ambition of his mind; there must be some other way provided, besides the excessive accumulation of wealth, by which the mass of mankind may become respectable in society. Human action must be directed to the accomplishment of a higher and a nobler purpose. Instead of pursuing a glittering and illusory phantom, which seduces all the nobler qualities of his nature, he must be induced to seek his true happiness by the road which nature has prepared.

But how? Simply by placing things upon their proper basis, and giving them their true value in the estimate of public sentiment. The practice of virtue must become the employment of life, and consequently wealth must be sought only so far as it can contribute to the natural wants of man. But in order to effect this, the practice of virtue must be the only road which leads to high social position, and the only means by which man can obtain the confidence and respect of his fellow-man, and virtue must be the sole dispenser of the rewards and benefits of society. Then, as man can secure those favors, and reach that position in society which he most desires, and which must always be the object of human effort, only by the practice of virtue, and, as wealth will be deprived of its crushing power and undue influence in society, he will be compelled to practice virtue, if not for the love of it, at least as a necessity, and thus man will be rescued from the mastery of his animal propensities, and bring into controlling vigor and action the higher sentiments of his nature, and become a rational and moral being, in fact, as well as in theory.

Why not? Is it indispensable to the organization of civilized society that wealth must be invested with this predominant power? If the natural attributes of man are such that he may become a rational and moral being, and really act as such, may he not be induced to pursue wealth only so far as it contributes to the real enjoyments of life, and to his own true interests? In order to become civilized, must he necessarily become the slave of wealth? Can not the social fabric be so constructed that it may become the happy abode of civilized man, and not be merely the imposing edifice which conceals so much unnecessary misery and suffering?

The views of human nature which we have been endeavoring to present, refute such an idea. The very fact that human efforts, which are within themselves essentially vicious, secure to their perpetrators higher social positions, provided that thereby they obtain additional wealth, unmistakably indicates a state of society which is perniciously false. Why is it that persons can commit acts which should make the devil blush, and still retain a respectable position in society, provided he is possessed of unnecessary wealth, while another person may practice acts of virtue which would make an angel smile, and yet be excluded from the circles of our "best society," if his deeds of love have prevented him from accumulating wealth? Why does society thus favor wealthy viciousness and spurn moneyless virtue?

It is because it is falsely constituted, and has invested the possession of wealth with that influence which legitimately belongs to the practice of virtue; and consequently men must worship the popular idol in order to become respectable. It should be the founding principle of society that every person who violates the principles of natural virtue is morally dishonest, and though he were the possessor of untold millions of gold, he should be spurned as a human viper from the society of virtuous and honest men. When this shall be done, men can no longer reach position and respectability in society by outraging virtue and even common honesty at every step, and human happiness will no longer be defeated by human effort, and it will no longer be necessary for persons to forfeit all the rational enjoyments of life, and sell their souls to the devil, in order to become respectable in the sight of men.

This social revolution can be effected only by enhancing the value of moral conduct in the public

estimate of private character, and by correcting that vitiated public sentiment which so unduly rewards the possession of wealth. It can never be effected by the present systems of moral and religious instruction. The radical defect of the teaching and preaching of the present day is that it attempts to prevent an effect without removing the cause, and consequently must necessarily be unsuccessful. The cause of wealth being so exclusively sought in the present age is the undue importance which society attaches to its possession, while sufficient importance is not attached to the practice of virtue, the effect is that the members of society make the accumulation of wealth the principal object of life, while they neglect the practice of virtue. Now, all must admit that this effect can be prevented only by removing the cause; yet, we are not aware of the existence of any system of religion or education which is leveling its batteries at the real stronghold of the enemy, and making a consistent effort to divest wealth of its undue influence in society. Our schools, in effect, only teach the students the value of dollars and dimes. Thus those who are educated become only more intelligent money-seekers, and more effectually increase the evils by being enabled to accumulate larger amounts of wealth.

And even in the church, where worldly motives should be thrown aside, the love of wealth, if any difference, prevails more intensely than in the non-professing world, and no consistent efforts are made to overthrow the unjust distinctions which are made on account of wealth. The wealthy member of church is more respected by his fellow-members than is the more pious, but more humble brother. How discouraging is the fact that in those countries which are professedly the most christian, the love of wealth,

together with its resulting evils, prevail most intensely. This is not the fault of the religion, but of its professors. While their professions are sufficiently orthodox, their actions are in violation of the most important precepts of the Bible. They devote their talk to religion, and their earnest acts to the accumulation of wealth. The preachers may tell us that this is very wrong, but there is no danger of being "churched" for making the accumulation of wealth the exclusive object of life, if we only profess orthodox doctrines while we are about it. The education and religion of the day only intensify the evils which we would remedy; yet the schools and the churches, themselves reformed, must be enlisted in the work of true reformation. They create public sentiment, and shape the virtue and morality of the age. There the oppressive power of wealth must be first attacked, and the undue distinctions founded upon wealth leveled down, and true piety and virtue made the test of respect and position. Unless this can be done, the cause of humanity is hopeless, and man must continue to suffer misery and woe as the consequences of his own actions.

When those who are professedly moral and religious persons shall become practically so, in regard to the excessive accumulation of wealth, then will it be divested of its power, and the efforts of men diverted from its exclusive pursuit, and directed to the pursuit of true happiness by the practice of virtue, and human society will at last be placed upon the solid foundation of nature, and man will derive pleasure from the proper gratification of all his natural endowments, and suffer misery from the perversion of none. Then will man become respectable only by becoming virtuous, and wealthy rascality and fashionable viciousness will no longer be paraded in

the circles of our "best society," while humble, honest virtue is trailing in the dust. Then will true virtue assume the supreme control of human action, and, enlisting in her service all the purest affections of the human heart, and all the noblest endowments of human nature, man will achieve his highest destiny. Arouse ye, whose hearts throb for others woes, and burst asunder the golden fetters which are festering in the flesh of humanity. Be not idle while the wailings of misery and suffering are heard in all the habitations of man, and even now the golden vulture is preying upon his human victims. Far beyond the shores of time, lies open before the Eternal Throne, the book of life, in which is faithfully recorded all the follies and vices of man, which will glare in all their hideous deformity, when they are divested of their earthly garbs, amid the celestial brightness which surrounds the throne of the Omnicient Father.

ESSAY III.

THE INFLUENCE OF NOVEL READING.

Among the many evils of the present age, which are sapping the fountains of morality, polluting the sources of virtue and public spirit, and communicating their pernicious effects to the family circle, and thus instilling their poison into the budding mind of youth, and implanting in that fertile and unsown soil a pernicious seed, which will take deep root there, and overshadow and destroy the less rank, but more fruitful plants, of substantial mental culture, Novel Reading demands our most serious attention. While every other evil in the dark catalogue of human folly receives its due share of labored denunciation from the monitors of our public and private virtue and morality, this stands forth sanctioned by persons of high social and moral position, indorsed by fashion, sanctioned by religion, or rather by persons making high profession of religion, encouraged by parents, and recommended by the public press.

But powerful as these incentives are to the spread of this evil, they are of minor importance when we consider its most efficient promoter, that is, that Novel Reading is one of the principal sources of amusement of so large a portion of the community. Of all the forms which vice and folly ever assumed to assail and captivate the unwary human mind,

none are so successful, or fraught with such pernicious consequences, as when they clothe themselves in the attractive and fascinating garb of pleasure and amusement. When the amusements of a people are impure, when they contain vicious principles, which attack, silently and unobserved, the moral fortifications which the patriot and the philanthropist are continually erecting to guard the virtue and morality of the people, when the unsuspecting, simple mind of youth imbibes a pernicious principle, or a false idea, in the exhilarating draughts of its amusement, at moments when all the avenues which lead to the soul are opened by the flow of generous feeling, so that the glittering monster may enter, silently and unobserved, and stain its unsullied purity, then, indeed, are the sterling virtues of the mind assailed in a most vulnerable point, and surrounded by hidden dangers armed with the most potent energies.

There is nothing which conduces more to a sound morality, and a healthy public sentiment, than amusement, the sources of which are kept pure and undefiled, and from which every false principle and infectious influence are scrupulously eradicated; but, on the contrary, if the source of amusement is the source of vice, and it convey to the mind, in a pleasing and attractive form, unsound teachings, and unreal and exaggerated views of human nature, and of all the various shades and phases of human existence, the mind eagerly receives the false impressions, and, it being intoxicated by the exciting draught, the teachings of substantial truth gain no entrance. That must necessarily be a low state of virtue and morality which is founded upon such a basis. In truth, the public sentiment of a community is exalted or debased, in a great measure, as

the amusement of the people inculcates the maxims of truth, and the integrity of moral character, or forms the public mind upon false and exaggerated images of nature, and of actual existence, unfounded either in the true theory or virtuous practice of real life.

As Novel Reading is a principal source of amusement, especially among the young, and as there are so many powerful causes which conspire to render it a popular, and, as it is thought, an innocent and useful amusement, and as it, therefore, directly affects the most serious duties of life, and exerts a controlling influence for good, or for evil, upon the welfare and happiness of humanity, let us candidly and seriously inquire into the nature and results of this influence. Whatever this influence may be, it enters largely into the social atmosphere of the fireside, and there impresses its own features upon the maturing mind of youth, while fashion deeply quaffs, in idle hours, its exciting draughts, and even professed religion has no hesitancy in devouring the enticing page. If there be evil consequences resulting from it, it is certainly of the utmost importance that they should be correctly appreciated by the public, for being so intimately interwoven into all the relations of life, and thus affecting every age, sex, and condition, its influence silently and quite unrebuked, but insidiously, works out its evil results, while the mind, unaware of being assailed, reposes in fancied security, and caresses the exciting images of the romance, until it unconsciously becomes the victim of an invincible, vicious habit.

The first objection to Novel Reading which we shall notice is, that it affects, in a peculiar manner, the mind of man. It is exclusively an employment of the mind, and consequently if there are any evil

results connected with it, they do not affect merely the mortal man, but they affect the immortal mind, the living, eternal principle of man. The reason, intelligence, and judgment of man constitute the difference between rational and irrational or brute beings. This reason, intelligence, and judgment are the results of the exercise and development of the faculties with which the human mind is endowed, consequently man has neither reason, intelligence, or judgment at the time of his birth. But these qualities are not only formed by the exercise and development of the faculties of the mind, but this exercise and development impress their own character upon these qualities, consequently the reason, intelligence, and judgment of man will be true or false, virtuous or vicious, according as the faculties of the mind have been exercised and developed by the acquisition of truth and the practice of virtue, or by the acquisition of error and the practice of vice. For this reason it entirely accords with the experience and observation of life, that if persons have been taught false principles, or the faculties of their minds have been developed by the practice of vice, the operations of their reason, intelligence, and judgment are very sure to lead them into the practice of error and vice, and, on the contrary, those who have been taught the principles of truth and virtue, their reason, intelligence, and judgment will lead them to the practice of truth and virtue.

The character of the mind being thus determined by the exercise and development of its faculties, let us consider, whether the false and exaggerated imitations of life and nature usually contained in novels are suitable materials for forming the reason, intelligence, and judgment of a rational being. A novel is

the narration of a train of fictitious incidents and circumstances, generally in imitation of the most thrilling and unusual events of human life, and highly colored and exaggerated by the fancy and imagination of the writer. Its interest consists in its exaggeration and false coloring, or else, why not relate actual events, and the true history of man, and the incidents of actual life, by portraying human nature as it is manifested in the transactions of real life, which, if the exaggeration were not the great interest in novels, would be equally interesting to novel readers, and at the same time convey useful instruction and correct knowledge of life, as it actually exists. This exaggeration and false coloring consists in overdrawn pictures of life, and false views of human nature, drawn in the narration of fictitious circumstances and incidents, the like of which seldom or never did or can occur in real life, and therefore, the knowledge and principles derived from Novel Reading are false, and therefore vicious.

But, as already shown, this knowledge and these principles impress their own character upon the mind and really form the reason, intelligence, and judgment of man, and hence it follows that the reason, intelligence and judgment of man thus formed are false, and will therefore lead him into error and vice. If man's intelligence be innate and uninfluenced by the discipline of the mind, then he is endowed only with a high order of instinct, and no mental exercise or cultivation of his own can have any influence whatever upon his reason, his intelligence, or his judgment. And again, if these mental qualities are not influenced and determined by the character of the exercise and cultivation of the faculties of the mind, then the question of vice and virtue does not depend upon human conduct, and it can make no difference,

whether the youthful mind be virtuously or viciously educated. But every experience of life proves that neither of these can be the case, therefore the faculties of the mind are developed by exercise, and the nature of the exercise determines the character of the mind. As the reason, intelligence and judgment of man are thus determined by the exercise of the mental faculties, and as Novel Reading is exclusively an exercise of the mental faculties, and as it conveys to the mind none of that correct and substantial knowledge which is essential to the proper discharge of the practical duties of life, but on the contrary stores it with false principles and impracticable and exaggerated views of life and nature, it follows that it exerts a most pernicious influence upon those qualities of the mind which constitute the rationality of man.

But it will be said that novels are not read for instruction or improvement, but merely for amusement and pastime. Neither do persons engage in any vice or folly for instruction or improvement, yet their influences are engrafted upon the mind. For the very reason that it is an amusement, as, already shown, it is armed with more potent dangers. Every exercise of the mental faculties has its influence in developing the mind, and the exercise is not by any means deprived of its influence because it is pleasing and attractive. The mind of man may be aptly compared to the soil of the earth. As the different portions of the earthly soil are of different degrees of fertility, so is the mental soil of the different faculties of the same mind, and of different minds, of different degrees of fertility. As the most fertile soil produces the rankest weeds if not under the careful culture of the husbandman, so the strongest and most

vigorous minds produce the rankest vices and follies, if they are not properly cultivated.

If the husbandman sow precious seeds in the soil, he will reap a harvest of useful grain and fruits; so if the seeds of true virtue and morality be sown in the soil of the mind, and properly cultivated, it will produce an abundant harvest of usefulness and happiness. If the soil of the earth be neglected, it will be overgrown with briars and brambles; so, if the soil of the mind be neglected, it will be overgrown with the brambles of ignorance and superstition. If the husbandman scatter tares upon the earth, he shall reap a harvest of tares; so in the mind; if you sow the seeds of exaggeration and fiction, you will reap a harvest of error and falsehood. As it is sown so shall you reap. The soil of the earth does not more invariably produce that in kind, which is sown, than does the soil of the mind. If useful facts and the principles of truth be implanted in the mind, it will produce an abundant harvest of that substantial knowledge, which is absolutely essential to sound reason, intelligence, and judgment; and just as inevitably as tares produce tares in the soil of the earth, do the seeds of false principles and immorality planted in the soil of the mind, produces error and misery.

It must be obvious to every one, that these comparisons are no fancy flights of the imagination; but that they are founded upon the immutable laws of nature, and verified by the experience of real life; and we have only to observe the sowing of the seeds and the reaping of the harvests in our own minds, and of those by whom we are immediately surrounded, in order to witness the unerring certainty of the operation of nature's laws. How important is it then, that none but the seeds of virtue should be sown in

the mind, and that it should receive that substantial mental culture, which alone can insure an abundant yield of virtuous and useful deeds. How fearful are the responsibilities of those to whose care and cultivation the Creator has intrusted his human farms. They are planting a man for time, and a soul for eternity; a man whose mind shall be stored with the golden fruits of essential truth, and around which, as a solar center, shall revolve all the purest virtues, receiving from it a perennial stream of heavenly radiance; or a man whose mind shall be filled with vice and error, blasting, by their withering curse, every germ of truth and virtue which would take deep root in its soil.

Beware what seed you sow in that precious soil. If the husbandman is careful what seed he sows in the earthly soil, the fruits of which pass away before the autumn frosts, how much more careful should you be in sowing the seed in the immortal mind; the growth and results of which will yet endure when time shall be no more. God have mercy on those who sow in the soil of their minds the seeds of exaggeration, faction, and falsehood, knowing that as they sow so must they reap, and who thus sow tares in their immortal minds, to ripen beyond the grave, and to be harvested in eternity.

The mind has also been justly compared to a sheet of pure white paper. When the mind first comes from the hand of its Creator, it is pure as the morning dew. It is yet unstained by any of those contaminating influences which necessarily surround it, when it is brought in contact with fallen and degraded humanity. But like the sheet of paper, it is capable of receiving and retaining any impressions which circumstances may make upon it; and as there may be written upon the paper the impressions of

truth; the teachings of religion; the beauties, the pleasures and the enjoyments of practical virtue, and also the impression of facts and useful knowledge; so, also, may these impressions be written upon the pure and unperverted faculties of the mind, and they will feed and grow upon them, until they become incorporated into the essential qualities of the mind, and thus is formed that sound reason, intelligence and judgment which characterize the man of sterling energy, virtue and integrity. And as the paper may also receive and retain the impressions of exaggeration and falsehood, the images of false principles, the apologies of immorality, and receive the impressions of vice and folly displayed to the public gaze in the fascinating garb of pleasure and amusement, so may the mind receive and retain all these impressions, and feed upon them until their poisoning influences are instilled into the very nature of all its faculties.

As the hand of education writes upon the spotless tablets of the mind, so is it received and retained. If the principles of truth and virtue be recorded there, they will beam forth in acts of usefulness and good will, but if the black impress of falsehood and error has been written upon these tablets, they will be faithful to the record, and display its falseness in acts of vice and folly. Hence we see that persons whose minds have received the false impressions of Novel Reading are continually floundering about in the great ocean of human existence, trying to live in some imaginary, romantic, love-sick world, while the inexorable laws of nature's God bind them down to the stern realities of earthly existence, floating recklessly upon the tide of human events, without those fixed principles of mind, and that determined energy of action, which mark the mind of virtuous

training, and without the desire or capacity to encounter and struggle with the stern realities of life. Such a human vessel is tossed upon the billows of the troubled ocean, upon which it is sailing, without the compass of truth to direct it into the harbors of peace and safety, but the false and exaggerated ideas of this ocean of humanity, which serve as its guide, direct it upon the shoals of error, where the vessel is stranded, and, too frequently, the voyage of life terminates in disappointment, misfortune and misery. Who ever heard of an habitual novel reader who ever accomplished any thing in life worthy of the God-like faculties of human rationality, or who ever heard of an individual who controlled the events of his own age, or of one whose principles and teachings controlled human events for long ages after he was moldering in his grave, who was an habitual novel reader?

Nothing can be truer than the metaphysical maxim, that "the mind grows upon what it feeds upon." What, then, can possess more pernicious properties for it to "grow upon" than to "feed upon" the exaggeration and false teachings contained in novels? If the mind grows upon what it feeds upon, it follows that if it feed upon false principles, the essential qualities of the mind will be false, that is, the reason, intelligence and judgment of the mind, thus nurtured, will be false. There is nothing in more uniform accordance with the experience of life than that if the mind be fed upon false instruction it will grow upon it, that is, the mind does receive and retain false instruction; and, further, nothing is more inevitably certain than that all the acts and thoughts of the mind rest upon the basis and result from the instruction which it has received. Hence, the person whose mind has received false instruction

thinks and acts falsely, his reason, intelligence, and judgment, the only guides which he can have to direct him in the journey of life, are unfaithful; and he is involved in a maze of difficulties and disappointments, because the stern realities of life are different from the vanishing chimeras of romance.

Fiction is not necessarily the instrument of evil consequences. The evils of novel reading do not result merely because the characters represented and the incidents narrated are fictitious, but, on the contrary, true virtue and pure and undefiled morality may some times be more efficiently taught by being attired in the pleasing garb of fiction. Christ taught the purest virtue and the truest righteousness by means of parables, but let it be distinctly remembered that there is a very material difference between the Scripture parables and modern novels. Yet all novels are not to be equally condemned. Perhaps the productions of Miss Edgeworth, Sir Walter Scott, and authors of like standard, may be read without much actual injury to the mind, any farther than it always induces a taste for such reading, which, if not carefully guarded, soon debases itself into regular Novel Reading, and, consequently, becomes a vice, which destroys all taste of substantial reading. But the novels with which the interminable fecundity of the press has at present flooded the country, are too generally in the last stage of degeneracy. They are too frequently the hyperbolical emanations of distorted imaginations, and without teaching any good moral, they teem with the most pernicious error and with the most extravagant misrepresentations of life and nature. The excelsior attainment of modern novel writing seems to be to make the widest strides of fantastic imagery, to draw the most distorted and wonder-provoking

pictures of life, pictures which captivate the dissipated mind of the novel reader merely on account of their utter variance from the events which usually occur in real life. Let every lover of truth and virtue unqualifiedly condemn such nefarious publications. There needs only to be created a general taste for more substantial reading, in order that the shelves of our bookstores and libraries may be filled with the substantial nourishment of literature, instead of its chaff and cheat.

Yet it is certainly not objectionable that if truth and morality could be more pleasantly and forcibly taught by means of fiction, that it should be adopted, but there is this consideration always in favor of teaching the same principles by means of actual facts and events, that while fiction merely conveys to the mind the naked moral, facts more effectually accomplish the same object, and at the same time store the mind with useful knowledge. And again, when the reader is aware that the events and incidents narrated are fictitious, the mind acquires a carelessness and indifference in regard to the matter stated, and eagerly devours only the exciting error and falsehood, and thus blights all prospects of storing the mind with useful knowledge. Certainly the greatest benefit to be derived from reading is, that it furnishes the mind with a knowledge of real events, with the materials of truth, and with a correct understanding of those great cardinal principles of life and nature, which govern and control ourselves, and every thing by which we are surrounded, and which, consequently, determine our happiness in all the relations of human existence. But in as much as it is the very nature of fiction that it does not relate real events, and does not teach the real principles of things, and, of course, discards facts altogether, consequently it can be of

no aid whatever in accomplishing these most vitally important objects.

But added to these, there is another insurmountable objection. Although mere fiction itself may be comparatively harmless, yet it can not be confined within harmless limits. It is not the mere fiction that is vicious, but it is the pernicious error and exaggeration which constitute its great interest. It requires no authority to substantiate it; it is not founded upon actual facts and events which can be investigated; it holds no allegiance with real principles, and so it soars untrammeled into the illimitable regions of fancy. But as it is not the unadorned moral which is so enticing to the mind of the novel reader, the fictionist, in order to make his production interesting and attractive, ornaments his morality and pictures of human nature, with highly colored exaggerations, and with brilliant but unreal creations of the imagination, and from these result the evil consequences of Novel Reading. Exaggeration and false pictures of life can not be presented to the mind in such a pleasing and attractive form, without exerting a very decided influence. Facts are stubborn things, and truth is eternal, and all adding to, or subtracting from either, is falsehood and misrepresentation, which falsify the reason, intelligence, and judgment of the mind, and soon manifest their results in acts of vice, and in the want of that energy and virtuous action which receive the rewards of success in life, and which can be the prize only of minds matured by virtuous discipline, and stored with useful knowledge.

Twenty-five hundred years ago, when Thespis, the inventor of tragedy, was acting one of his plays before the people, Solon, the great Athenian law-giver, and

one of the most celebrated sages of antiquity, asked him "whether he was not ashamed to utter such lies before so many people?" Thespis answered "that there was no harm in lies of that sort, and in fictions which are made only for diversion." Solon replied with much earnestness, "But if we suffer and approve of lying for our diversion, it will quickly find its way into our serious engagements, and all our business and affairs." This is truth and wisdom, verified by the experience of every age of the world.

The great argument of the advocates of Novel Reading is that novels generally contain a high tone of morality, that they plead its claims and display its beauties and rewards before the audience of the mind in that style and manner which is best calculated to arrest and fix its attention. If there is any good resulting from Novel Reading this is certainly it, for it can not be pretended that it teaches facts and substantial instruction. Let us analyze this morality, and test its purity. In the first place, we find it visionary and chimerical. As it devolves upon the novel writer to create his own circumstances and incidents, and also his own morality, they make excellent use of their high prerogatives, and are generally very successful in creating a romantic ontology, which is a very material improvement on the pattern which the author of nature has set them, when He created man and the world in which he is placed. Having thus created a new order of beings, it of course devolves upon the novel writer to manufacture a system of morality which will suit them, for as these beings are very different from such as we usually find in real life, of course our kind of morality would not suit them. Hence this goose-quill morality is only applicable to the inhabitants of this fancy world. These denizens of fancy soar away above the dull

earth, and vanish into utter nothingness, to escape the stern and unyielding mandates of nature, to which the plodding inhabitants of this sublunary sphere are inexorably subjected. How finely do these fantastic beings get along, when it only requires a stroke of the pen to repeal the laws of nature, and to produce any desired event. But when you come to grapple with the stern realities of life, you might be sadly disappointed when you find that things are conducted in a very different manner.

True morality is the proper discharge of those duties which are required of man by the inexorable conditions of his existence, and which elevate his condition, and promote his happiness. Novel morality is the fictitious action of fictitious and fantastic characters, portraying an imaginary and impracticable state of existence, and applicable only to a train of events and circumstances which very unusually, or never occur in real life. Consequently the morality taught in novels is no more substantial than are the incidents and events, and both are worse than useless, so far as regards the proper understanding of the real conditions of human existence, and also the proper discharge of the practical duties of life. Hence it is that novel readers so frequently have such romantic and unreal ideas of life. The sterner realities of life are generally extremely unromantic, and consequently, if it be undertaken to make a pleasing and dramatic romance out of life, it must always be unsuccessful, and can only lead to bitter disappointment. Thus are all the best enjoyments of life destroyed.

Yet there is a thrilling interest in reality. What can fill the imagination with more thrilling emotion and excitement than the grand pictures drawn upon the face of nature by the Supreme Artist of the

heavens and the earth. What book can contain more sublime and interesting revelations than the book of nature, the author of which is God himself? Oh, what a novel is here for man to read, a novel not fictitious, but written by the Author of nature. The characters represented are man himself, the circumstances portrayed are the universal existence, and the events narrated are all those which transpire in the regular operation of universal nature. The scenes laid are the sun, the moon, the planets, the fixed stars, and the wandering comets, which fill illimitable space; the earth and all the fullness thereof: the moral taught is the will of God. The instruction to be derived from this volume is the scheme of human happiness, the principles which it impresses upon the mind are those of virtue, morality, religion; and the motives which it inspires in the soul are those of sincere reverence and devotion for God in heaven, and "peace and good will to man on earth." Where can you find a volume of such thrilling and momentous interest and importance, except its counter-part, the Bible? Do you say in that "yellow-backed" or fancy-bound book in which love-sick phantasms and puppet heroes, the creatures of some distorted imagination, perform valorous deeds in the spheres of fancy and the regions of fantastic unreality, and all with a nonsensicalness which should sicken any mind which is not already mentally diseased and perverted. Oh shame, shame, shame.

Are the grand designs and operations of nature's God less interesting to you than the imaginary adventures of some love-sick novel popinjay? Is your mind so sunk in mental perversion that it becomes an irksome task to investigate and reflect upon those principles which govern your welfare and happiness

as a mortal and as an immortal being, and can you only derive pleasure from devouring the tempting, but poisonous fruits of fiction and error? Do you wish to enjoy an intellectual feast of wonder and sublimity? Behold those revolving worlds. Will they not inspire in the soul the transporting emotions of wonder and admiration, equally as well as the frantic capers of a love-sick novel hero? Do you wish to enjoy a calm and consoling revery of the mind, when the soul shall return in calmness from the strife and bickerings of the world, and hold sweet communion with its God? Behold that majestic river, as its waters are continually moving down the stream to mingle with those of the great ocean of waters. As it moves along it is frequently disturbed by the howling storm, and by the accession of foaming, turbid streams; yet these only hurry it on more swiftly and more violently, until it mingles with the waters of the ocean. How emblematic of the stream of time! Man makes no stop in its ceaseless current until he arrives at his final destiny, and the immortal principle of humanity mingles in the great ocean of eternity. But as he moves along in the current of time, how frequently are the limpid waters of virtuous life disturbed by the howling storms of passion, and agitated and polluted by the turbid streams of vice, which only hurry him on more swiftly and more violently to the doom of time and the morning of eternity; and as the waters of the river carry the pollution and turbidness which they have received into the ocean, unless they are purified by flowing through channels which are clear of mud and filth, and do not mingle with the waters of muddy streams; so the living principle of man flows into the ocean of eternity, stained by the pollutions of vice and folly which it has received as it floated down the stream

of time, unless it is purified by flowing through the channels of virtue, and afterward kept from mingling with the polluting streams of vice. But can the investigation of these immutable principles, which determine the question of happiness for time and eternity, be so interesting to the virtuous mind as the pursuit of a fleeting phantom through the regions of fancy, or afford to it such intense gratification as to know what becomes of Little Dorrit?

The reason why mankind generally are not more interested in the study of the great volume of nature, which contains a plain and detailed exposition of the plan of human existence, is because they never open the book of nature to read it. They merely look at the back of it. The mere external face of nature, as we see it every time that we look out at the window, or as we observe it in bad roads, stormy weather, or some misfortune which painfully affects us, is only the back of the book of nature: the real contents lie beneath this back. And because people observe the external appearances of nature, every day of their lives, they become weary even of its loveliest beauties, and turn from them with perfect indifference, without ever having opened the book of nature to partake of the rich intellectual feast which is contained therein. Ah, beneath that old cover which you so often look upon with such utter thoughtlessness, there is contained some of the most valuable and the most sparkling gems of thought, and some of the most delicious morsels of intellectual food. What can afford more exquisite delight to the virtuous mind, than to read the will of God, as he has written it with his own hand in the book of nature? Every mineral and other substance which lie beneath the surface of the earth, and every plant shrub, tree and flower which spring from its surface,

are so many words expressing the meaning of God. But we can not understand the meaning of these words of God, merely by looking at the plant or flower without studying them, any more than we can understand a word of the Greek language by looking at it, without knowing the Greek alphabet. The individual nature of each of these natural objects is the first rudiments of natural science, the alphabet which spell the words with which God has expressed his will in the book of nature. Open this book, my friends, learn its language, and read the will of God. Behold there the exquisite workmanship of every plant and flower, as if the most persevering labor had been bestowed upon each individual bud and bloom, to adapt them to the wants of men. Read in this the boundless beneficence and goodness of an Allwise Creator.

But with what intense interest should we open the volume of human nature. This is the most intricate and infinitely the most important of all human studies. In this volume God has expounded the principles which governs man in all his relations as a human being, and he has furnished each individual person, in his own nature, with a copy of the work. Here the natural laws of man furnish the principle of study, and every human act, and all the events and incidents of real life, every glow of health, every pang of disease, every joyous emotion, and all the sorrows and trials of disappointment and misery, are only practical illustrations of these principles. Study them and learn their meaning. The happiness and enjoyment of every moment of human life depend upon their operation. And although man has thus been receiving lessons from this volume during the whole period of his existence, yet he but poorly understands its meaning. He has not yet even learned

the alphabet of the language of his own nature. He is sick and he thinks God has especially afflicted him. He seeks happiness by violating the most important laws of his nature, and thinks he is unfortunate because he is unsuccessful. He knows but very little of the real government of God, although he has been governed by it, without the slightest change in its laws and institutions for sixty centuries. Read this book, my friends, read it carefully and earnestly. It will not only afford you the rarest intellectual enjoyment, but it will also teach you the road which leads to mortal and to immortal happiness.

How the dignity of human rationality is lowered in our estimation, when we reflect that it can be perverted to that degree in which it can derive more pleasure and satisfaction from devouring mere mental phantasms and vain idealities, than it can from the investigation of those substantial realities which constitute the foundation of all permanent human welfare and happiness. As the pleasures to be derived from the practice of virtue, are, in all cases, more substantial and enduring than those to be derived from the practice of vice, so are the pleasures to be derived from the study of the principles of reality, more substantial and enduring than those which result from reading mere fiction. And as virtue always bestows its reward upon those who practice it, while those who practice vice suffer the inevitable penalty, so the study of the principles of reality stores the mind with that useful knowledge, which is entirely essential to success and happiness in life, while the reading of exaggerated fiction fills the mind with inflated and erroneous conceptions of life and nature, which have a tendency to defeat all efforts of usefulness, and too often renders life a blasted and barren desert, which produces none of those substantial

fruits of virtuous effort which contribute to the happiness of humanity, but a dreary desert, overspread by the drifting sands of vice and indolence.

Substantial reading furnishes us with faithful guides to direct us in the journey of life; unsubstantial reading furnishes us with unfaithful guides, which misdirect us at every turn of the road. How frequently is it that we find the ideas of the novel reader only visionary, and whose waking hours are only dreams, while Novel Reading has fixed upon the mind the habit of considering every thing as imaginary and fictitious; he looks upon life as a romance, and, like an incarnate ghost, he passes down the stream of time, shuffled about by the stern realities of life, until death closes the sad and melancholy fiction.

But suppose we admit that the morality taught in novels is applicable to real life, let us examine briefly the mode of teaching. As it must be admitted by all that the principal interest in Novel Reading is derived, not from the moral which is thus taught, but from the exaggeration, the falsely-colored pictures, the thrilling incidents and misrepresentations of life which are contained in novels, and, as the mind can not receive the impression of the morality which is thus taught, even though it were pure, without also receiving the impression of the enticing error which is at the same time enforced upon the mind, it follows that the morality which is thus taught is necessarily an adulterated mixture of morality and error. But if true morality is so distasteful to the mind that it has to be clothed in fantastic fiction and exaggeration, in order to render it pleasing, it is very certain that the small portion of spurious morality usually contained in novels will have but little influence upon such a mind, while

it will feed almost entirely upon the enticing error. What! is true morality such a bitter pill that it has to be "sugar-coated" with glittering but pernicious error before the mind will receive it; that, in order to prepare a homœopathic dose of adulterated morality, to try to produce a wholesome physic upon the vitiated mind of the novel reader, it is necessary to conceal it in the mazes of the most fascinating but pernicious error and falsehood. Alas for such morality. The virtue which is drawn from such a source is so deeply contaminated with poisonous ingredients that the mind which feeds upon it must, necessarily, grow into mental morbidness and pervertion.

But it is urged that novels are the picture-galleries of human nature, that the attractive page of fiction and the hand of plastic fancy portrays, in nicer touches, the manifold features of human character, and thus more effectually impress their images upon the susceptible canvas of the mind. This claim might be true were one thing in regard to novels true, and that is, did they faithfully and truly portray the great fundamental and operative principles of human nature; but if they fail in this, then the claim is manifestly false. The important question then is, do they faithfully portray the cardinal principles of human nature, for if they fail in this, then their boasted pictures and dazzling images are only so many attractive and beautiful forms of vice and error. It immediately occurs to the reflecting mind that where all is manufactured from as unsubstantial materials as fiction, and where no unaccommodating realities interpose their unwelcome meddling with the accomplishment of human desires, but where man is pictured as mounting upon aërial wings and being wafted by the breezes of fancy into any port

of life which may be desired, and is invested by a stroke of the pen with a character which would be creditable to an angel, and as easily with one which would disgrace the devil, that there might occur some material discrepancies between this fantastic painting and the stern realities of life.

Beauty! thou whose heavenly inspirations send a joyous thrill to the soul, and whose potent charms hold the human mind in ecstasy, and blooms like a celestial flower in the dark and gloomy valleys of the trials and troubles of life, and beams forth its heavenly radiance there to soothe the pains and suffering of afflicted mortality, thou, the loveliest flower that grows in mortal soil, art sacrificed at the altar of fiction, robbed of thy real earthly robe, and dressed in the gaudy garbs of unreality. As the fictionist describes the personal charms of his heroine, we would reasonably think that he was picturing the beauty of some bright inhabitant of the fairy land, instead of the earthly flower, as it actually blooms in the great garden of humanity. Well might the most exquisite beauty that flirts in the halls of wealth and fashion blush at her own deformity when she reads of the Venus-like beauty of these fairies of the imagination.

Love, thou purest gem of the human heart, thou who bindest the fiercest passions of the human breast with the delicate and endearing fetters of pure impulse; thou, who castest thy bright beams into the desolate solitudes of the human heart, as the weary wanderer is passing through the desert places of life, and like a bright oasis, inviting him to the retreats of peace and safety; thou, whose purest devotions are offered up to youth, to manhood, and to age; offspring of heaven, and God's eternal attribute; thou, too, art offered a sacrifice at the

shrine of fiction, and clothed in the habits of disgusting novel love. The idea of life to be derived from novel reading, is that its great object and occupation is sexual love; not that calm and devoted love which springs from the sincere mind, and purifies every thought, and ennobles every act, but that selfish, jealous, boyish, mad love, which runs away with the reason, and paralyzes the noblest faculties of the mind. The hero of the novel is generally pictured in the colors of thrilling and romantic adventures, which fairly eclipse the fabulous exploits of the gods of heathenism; mad, jealous, envious, dreaming the dreams of visionary love, and whose very soul appears to be in the last stages of a fatal lovesickness, and in this plight he is held up before the mind, as the paragon of every virtue, and the very impersonation of manly action, and as a perfect model, after which to pattern the human character to struggle with the unyielding actualities of real life. And the heroine, whose celestial beauties trancsend those of either Helen or Venus, mounting her airy chariot of fancy, hurls her Cupid's arrows at this fantastic Jupiter, and conquers the mighty hero by the irresistible power of novel love.

Stand aside, ye pigmy specimens of humanity, and behold the awful strides of gods and mighty heroes, as they contend against difficulties, such as mortal man never overcame, and under such marvellous circumstances as the dull transactions of human life never produce. But what can equal the mighty deeds of fancy? By a single stroke of the pen miracles are performed, and God's eternal laws repealed, and in their aërial flight, escalading all obstacles which are insurmountable to plodding humanity, they accomplish wonders which fabulous antiquity never dreamed of, and pursuing the phan-

tom of visionary love through all the vicissitudes of novel life, through the smoke of gunpowder arising from the duels of rivals, and amid

> "That wrath which hurled to Pluto's gloomy reign
> The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain,"

and through many miraculous escapes, which

> "Make each particular hair stand on end,"

they are at last married, and this completes the thrilling and interesting picture of life and nature. Life seems to stop short at marriage, and there are no duties of after life which need be portrayed in this faithful picture of human life. Here we are left entirely in the dark, and as there is no account extant of the wonderful doings of any of these heroes and heroines after marriage, we may reasonably conclude that this act completely destroys their wonderful power, and they stop short in their romantic career, and afterward go plodding though life some thing like the common race of men. In the name of eternal truth, we ask, is this portraying human nature? is this faithfully drawing a chart of the journey of life, and distinctly displaying those dangerous snags and sandbars which intersect the stream of time, and upon which are wrecked so many human vessels, as they are floating down its current? No! it is drawing a false chart, which, instead of directing them into the calm and peaceful waters of virtuous life, direct them into the sucking whirlpool of vice and folly, and they are dashed upon its dangerous rocks.

Man is fallible. God alone is infallible. The vail of hidden futurity obstructs the human gaze into future events, and as in painful uncertainty man

attempts to thread the maze of present events with a thousand paths strewed with flowery temptations to lead him astray, and as in darkness he is groping his way amid the complicated machinery of nature, with nothing but the star of truth to guide him on his dangerous way, and surrounded on every side by the precipices of error, over which he may be precipitated by a single false step; as he stands trembling thus upon the brink, undecided which way to move, he can only resort to his own mind to ask information to direct him on the road. The journey of life is traveled by many different roads. Some of these roads lead directly to the abodes of virtue and happiness; others lead to the dens of vice and misery. When the mind has been furnished with the principles of truth, and stored with that substantial knowledge, which explains the real nature of the country of human life; when the wandering traveler resorts to it for information, it is enabled to direct him upon the right road, but if it has been furnished with the images and phantasms of fancy and error, when the traveler asks for information, it directs him to a visionary happiness, by a road which can not be traveled in real life, and being thus misdirected, he wanders from the right road, and too frequently reaches the dens of vice and misery.

True knowledge only can afford any relief to the fallibility of human nature. Our liability to err decreases in proportion as our substantial knowledge increases. The attributes of reason and intelligence can operate upon such materials only as are furnished to them by human conduct, and it is by means of this operation of the faculties of the mind upon such circumstances or materials as are brought to bear upon them, that all human knowledge is obtained. Knowledge is not an innate quality of the

mind, but it is entirely the result of the action of the mind. Hence, if we wish to acquire a knowledge of geometry, we must study the science of geometry; and if we wish to obtain a knowledge of man and being, we must study the laws of his nature, and observe the effect of every human act upon human welfare. Now, if we undertake to do any kind of work, when we do not understand the proper manner of doing such work, we are extremely liable to err, and most probably will, at first, be entirely unsuccessful; but, if we properly understand how to do such work, we may do it without, perhaps, committing any mistakes, and our success is almost certain. Thus we acquire true and substantial knowledge, by experience and study, in every sphere of duty in which man is required to act, and our liability to error diminishes just in proportion as our substantial knowledge increases.

Hence, our success in life depends almost entirely upon our substantial knowledge. We can accomplish nothing in life unless we have a correct knowledge of the means required, and we scarcely need fail in the accomplishment of any enterprise which comes within the scope of human action, if we properly understand the true principles and laws by which it is governed, and which are essential to success. If, then, it be true that the natural laws execute themselves with unerring certainty, and that man is placed upon earth, subject to their unyielding operations, and that he is happy or miserable according as his acts are in accordance with, or in violation of, the requirements of these laws, that true and substantial knowledge only can teach him what these requirements are, and guard him against error in this most vitally important of all human interests; with what potent energies for the accomplishment

of evil is any pleasure, amusement, or conduct of life armed, which has the effect to falsify or weaken this principal pillar which sustains the fabric of human happiness. Novel Reading is not merely a passive evil which prevents the acquisition of substantial knowledge, by occupying the time which should be devoted to its acquisition, but it is an active evil, storing the mind with false and vicious knowledge, which unavoidably leads man into error in the discharge of the most important duties of life. In the constitution of human nature, the knowledge with which the mind is furnished is necessarily the guide which directs and determines all the actions and conduct of man. If this knowledge be false or visionary, it increases our liability to error; if it be true and substantial, as already shown, it diminishes it.

Does Novel Reading furnish to the mind that substantial knowledge which man so much needs when he is struggling with the stern realities of life? When he is involved in doubt and uncertainty as to his proper course of action, when he is surrounded with difficulties, which seem insurmountable, and when a single false step may lead him into irretrievable error, can he then resort to his stock of novel knowledge to afford him reliable information in the time of his utmost need? Ah, if he follow, only for a single step, the visions and dreams with which that knowledge has filled his mind, he is brought in painful collision with the stern realities which stare him in the face, and which he can not escape by a stroke of the pen, like those phantoms of the imagination, whose wondrous deeds he so much admired. Here, no web of romantic circumstance is to be woven; here, no ideal images dance upon the creations of fancy, but the stern and unyielding

actualities of life are to be met, and real flesh and blood man, with all his faults and errors, plodding and unromantic creature as he is, is to pass through the dull routine of the vulgar duties of life, to be satisfied with its insipid pleasures, and to submit to its bitter sufferings and miseries. How unlike the world of romance. There no inexorable realities interpose themselves, but, at the bidding of the fictionist, circumstances exist, incidents transpire, and characters figure in the phantasmagoria of the imagination, and all these are fancifully and brilliantly colored by thrilling adventures, so much more pleasing and exciting than those of real life, that the unwary mind is captivated and fatally entangled in the web of error.

But the objections to Novel Reading are rendered more serious by the fact, that it falsifies that part of human knowledge, which, of all others, it is most important to man should be true and substantial, by creating a fictitious humanity, and conducting it through a fictitious life, attended with fictitious and exaggerated incidents and circumstances, fictitious and false views and conceptions of real life and real humanity are fixed in the mind. What can be more unreal than the capricious and whimsical laws which govern these ideal phantoms? They are the mere caprices of distorted imaginations. How unlike those unchanging and inexorable laws which control the human character as it is represented upon the great stage of actual existence. These laws are the emanations of Divine wisdom. What can be more unreal than these ideal phantoms as they caper about in the realms of fancy? They are the fantastic creations of visionary minds. How different from man as he meets and struggles with the realities of life, enjoying happiness with every act in accordance with the

requirements of his nature, and suffering with every act in violation. He is the creation of God. How can it be expected that the romantic and unreal actions and adventures of the former can furnish to the mind, that substantial knowledge which only can enable the latter to successfully discharge the essential duties of life. Nothing can be attended with more disastrous consequences than the neglect or improper performance of the duties which nature requires at the hand of man. When the mind becomes imbued with the thrilling and romantic adventures and incidents of novel life, the dull realities and unromantic duties of real life are exceedingly distasteful and disgusting. The mind revolts at the very thoughts of them, and feeds upon the unsubstantial and stimulating materials of romance, which are more palatable to the perverted taste, until the reason, intelligence, and judgment of the mind are perverted and falsified, and as this false knowledge only increases the fallibility of human nature, persons thus become the victims of life's stern realities, while they are dreaming the dreams of romance. Substantial knowledge is the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, which God has appointed to direct his wandering children through the wilderness of ignorance, and guide them into the promised land of true happiness.

The thrilling interest which gives to fiction its most fascinating charm, and urges the eager mind to devour the images of pernicious error, is not the faithfulness with which it portrays nature, but its very oppositeness to it. The dull transactions of plodding humanity, the developments of sluggish time, the stern operations of nature, the moving phantasmagoria of real events, furnish no materials for the vitiated mind of the novel reader; but the only

feast which can furnish enjoyment and excitement for such minds, are the strange and overdrawn images whose shapes strike the mind with wonder, not because of their extraordinary faithfulness and truth, but because of their very strangeness and fantasticalness. That it is this feature of the fiction which so interests the novel reader is perfectly apparent, from the fact that the narration of real events and the exposition of the true principles of life, when unadorned by exaggeration and false coloring, are utterly repugnant and insupportable. Should the novelist attempt a true portraiture of the unromantic realities of life, and venture upon the narration of plain, uncolored facts, it would prove fatal to the reputation of his work, and the novel reader would throw it aside in despair, and pronouncing it a decided bore, he would beat a hasty retreat to the most adjacent bar-room, there to resuscitate his drooping spirits. Novel Reading, then, not only prevents the acquisition of substantial knowledge, which only can aid and direct us in the prosecution of a useful and happy life, but it stores the mind with that pernicious error which defeats the noblest purposes of life, and leads to misfortune and disappointment. Says the poet:

"A novel was a book
Three volumed, and once read; and oft crammed full
Of poisonous error, blackening every page;
And oftener still of trifling, second-hand
Remark, and old, diseased, putrid thought;
And miserable incident, at war
With nature, with itself, and truth at war;
Yet charming still the greedy reader on,
Till done—he tried to recollect his thoughts,
And nothing found but dreaming emptiness." POLLOK.

Novel Reading intoxicates the mind. It is an unnatural, unsubstantial, mental stimulant, and it has

none of those nurturing qualities which sustain and invigorate the virtuous mind; but many of those pernicious qualities which pervert and degrade it. How analogous to the intoxication produced by the excessive use of ardent spirits. Ardent spirits are an unnatural, unsubstantial physical stimulant. They possess none of those nurturing qualities which sustain and invigorate the human body, but their excessive use poisons and debilitates it. The one intoxicates the immortal mind, the other the mortal body. The effects of the physical intoxication may pass away with the fleeting hour, the effects of the mental intoxication may endure when time shall be no more. The reeling inebriate is certainly one of the most loathsome and disgusting objects which fallen humanity can produce; but it may well be a question of doubt, which is the most disgusting to the mind of virtuous and substantial discipline, the crazy wranglings and boisterous wickedness of the wretched drunkard, or the fulsome jargon and pompous nonsense of the novel reader. The one is drunk on whisky, and the other is drunk on error.

Yet the young lady, indulging in the pleasing illusion of her own innocence, while reading her ninety-ninth novel, will turn with a shudder, as from a reptile which might contaminate her own virtuous purity, from the young man who has indulged in a single dram. It is certainly her duty to discountenance dram-drinking, but it is likewise her duty to beware that she is not herself intoxicated with a more pernicious drug. Intemperance does not consist alone in the excessive use of ardent spirits, but the excessive novel reader is equally as intemperate as the excessive dram-drinker. How many are the fair and lovely beings who indulge in this species of intemperance with entire innocence of purpose, re-

joicing in the pleasing thought of their own untarnished purity, unconscious that the destroyer is lurking near, and that the delicious morsels which she so eagerly devours are only the treacherous baits which conceal the barbed hooks of error, which fix themselves relentlessly in all the faculties of the mind, and, like a deadly serpent concealed beneath lovely and tempting flowers, as she fondly caresses the flowers, the serpent stings her to the heart. Thou art to be pitied, O frail humanity, beset on every side by glittering snares, and that which seems to thee most beautiful and harmless, too frequently only conceals the deadliest venom.

But the most effectual means by which Novel Reading accomplishes the evil consequences which inevitably result from it, is, that it destroys all taste for more substantial reading. As the fatal serpent holds the innocent bird, which is doomed to destruction, spell-bound by the fascinating charm of its eye, until the unconscious victim yields itself voluntarily to the destroyer, so does Novel Reading, by its fascinating charm, hold the innocent, unsuspecting mind spell-bound, until it is unable to extricate itself from its pernicious influences, and all its noblest faculties, and all healthy taste for sound culture and substantial knowledge, yield easy prey to the fatal charmer. The mind, after reveling in the enchanting regions of fancy, and indulging in the fond delusions of visionary happiness, can not, without the most painful inflictions, make the sudden transition from these fairy lands into the dull sphere of reality. This is in accordance with the simplest of nature's laws. In the mind, as well as the body, when it once yields to the corrupting influences of vice, virtuous effort becomes an irksome task. The poisoned drops of vicious pleasure become sweet, and the substantial

nourishment of virtuous pleasure becomes distasteful. The thrilling and unreal incidents of novels afford a pleasing, but vicious excitement, to the mind, and they require no severe mental effort; but plain, unvarnished facts afford no unnatural mental stimulant, and it requires virtuous mental effort to store their useful and substantial fruits in the garners of the mind.

As the vitiated appetite which has formed its taste and desires for the highly seasoned and richly flavored dishes of luxury, which, though sweet to the palate, are poisonous to the stomach, and destroy its healthy tone, until it refuse with disgust the wholesome and substantial diet which sustains and invigorates the system, so, likewise, the perverted mind, which has formed the taste and habit of feasting upon the exciting and illusive images of romance, can scarcely undertake a more irksome task than the investigation of the principles of substantial truth and reality. The mind is in such a morbid state that it revolts at the very thoughts of substantial food. And, again: the appetite which has been depraved by the use of ardent spirits, craves nothing else, and continually thirsts for some unnatural stimulant, to elevate it above its proper natural state. The mind is governed by precisely the same natural law. If it has been perverted by the unnatural stimulant of exaggerated fiction, it craves nothing else, it hates the vulgar cares of real life, and loves to drink deeply in the exciting cup of romance, to dream the dreams of visionary unreality, and to elevate itself above the monotonous affairs of stupid humanity.

From these reflections, we perceive that the sustenance of the mind and of the body is regulated by the same fundamental principles of nature; and,

moreover, that as a healthy and vigorous physical constitution can not be developed by stimulating and unsubstantial diet, neither can a vigorous and comprehensive mind be developed by exciting and unsubstantial mental diet, and by the same unyielding law of nature that the artificial appetite craves stimulating and unwholesome, and loathes substantial food, the perverted mind longs for the excitement of novels, and revolts at the thought of substantial knowledge. How perfectly is this theory verified by the experience of life? If we look around the circle of our friends and acquaintances, we shall invariably find that the devoted novel reader has an insuperable distaste, not only for the practical facts of substantial knowledge, but also for the practical duties of virtuous life, and that this evil principle fixes itself in the mind in proportion as the person forsakes reality for unreality.

The acquirement of truth and substantial knowledge is the great cardinal virtue of the human mind, and consequently it is invested with the charms and beauties which inevitably attend the practice of virtue. Truth is the germ from which spring all the noble virtues which adorn the most exalted humanity, and, therefore, the mind in which the germ is not implanted can not produce the fruits of virtue. Virtue can not, by any means, result from falsehood or error, and, as it has been abundantly shown that the ideas and instruction derived from novel reading are generally false and erroneous, it follows conclusively that true virtue can not result from Novel Reading. True, there are frequently many ennobling and elevating principles taught in novels, but they are generally taught together with so much error and exaggeration, that the beneficial influences are overcome by the evil consequences. If the teaching

of the ennobling and elevating principles of truth be the object, we protest against this willful adulteration. It is this adulteration which depraves the mental appetite, and thus prevents the mind from drawing forth perennial streams of virtue and happiness from the fountains of eternal truth.

How melancholy is the reflection that the human mind, the divine impress of the eternal soul, the master-piece of God's creation, whose faculties, soaring on the wings of truth, scale the dizzy hights of science, and search the secret recesses of nature, until she yields her rich treasures of knowledge, can become so perverted and vitiated as to be lost to all the charms and beauties of truth, that purest gift of Heaven's bountiful hand, the immaculate flint from which the rugged strokes of life strike forth living sparks of consolation and joy, and casts a heavenly radiance over the fading bloom of human mortality, and sinks to its earthly sleep to rise in brighter effulgence beyond the gloomy portals of the grave. The mind which is thus rendered incapable of appreciating the charms and delights which are ever attendant upon the investigation of truth, is deprived of the purest and sweetest intellectual pleasures which mortal man can enjoy. Thought, that divine essence of incarnate man, which, divested of all corporeality, revels in unrestrained freedom in the illimitable realms of universal truth, and traveling on the wings of infiniteness, through all the vistas of the past, it scans the impenetrable embattlements which guard the jealous future, now holding communion with the infinitesimal, then contemplating the vast proportions of distant Jupiter, even thought is diverted from its noble purpose of unlocking the fountains of truth, and

sent in bewildering pursuit of fleeting phantoms and sparkling error.

But how absurd is the practice of all folly and vice. Without considering them with regard to the question of right and wrong, even then they have absolutely nothing to recommend their practice. Perverted gratification is their only apology, for not even the most abandoned debauchee will pretend that vice or folly is practiced for the accomplishment of any good purpose, but only for the fleeting and seductive pleasure and excitement which is produced by the gratification of perverted faculties and artificial appetites. Pleasure and gratification are their only pleas, and, therefore, if more pleasure and gratification can be derived from the practice of virtue, vice and folly are without an excuse. The attainment of happiness is certainly the object of every human being, and consequently that line of conduct should be adopted which confers most of the pleasures and enjoyments of life, and inflicts the fewest of its sufferings and miseries. But how strange it seems when we behold man, boasting of being a moral and a rational being, persistently pursuing in that course of conduct which most effectually defeats the aim and object of all human conduct, the attainment of happiness. There are really only two paths, although differing in degrees, by which we can travel the journey of life; the one is the path of virtue, and the other the path of vice—the one leads to happiness, the other to misery—and although these paths are so plainly marked that no man need mistake them, and although all mankind are aiming to travel the path which leads to happiness, yet, by far the greater portion, by some strange infatuation, take the path which leads to misery.

No human act can be wrong in the sight of God,

which is not punished as a violation of his natural laws, and every act which incurs the penalties of a violated natural law, is a sin. This may make a very materially different distribution of right and wrong from that which is made by the prevailing systems of religion. It may condemn many of the favorite vices which the most straight-out professors of religion indulge in with the most perfect ease of conscience, and without the slightest suspicion that they are violating the will of God. The orthodox vices of the age are almost as innumerable as the stars of heaven. It is the great misfortune of the prevailing systems of religion that it is too frequently the case, that acts which receive the frowns of God, receive their smiles, and acts which receive His smiles, receive their frowns. There are thus great discrepancies between the will of God and the prevailing creeds of religion. If we differ thus with many professors of religion, it is with the greatest respect for their sincerity and devotion wherever we find it. But wherever we find the will of God written with his own hand in the nature of things, we are going to read it, and read it aloud, regardless of the opposition which we shall thereby incur. This is the only guide which can lead us safely through the mazes of error and absurdity which human fallibility and credulity have engrafted upon those truths, which, of all others, are most important to man.

Every act in violation of the will of God is a sin, but the natural laws are the will of God, therefore, every act in violation of the natural laws is a sin, and as all human suffering and misery are the consequences of the violations of natural laws, it follows that all human suffering and misery are the consequences of our sins against God. Every headache, every pain, every premature infirmity of our nature,

is the result of our own acts, and every such act is a sin in the sight of God, and therefore, where members of church suffer as much pain and misery as those who are not members of church, they are equally as great sinners. But it may be said, that it is frequently the case that persons who avowedly violate the most essential principles of virtue and morality, do not suffer as much pain and misery as the most pious christians. In the first place, as already shown, pious christians do not suffer pain and misery unless they have been violating natural laws, and thus sinning against God; and in the next place, the persons who thus violate the principles of virtue and morality, suffer much pain and misery from perverted appetites and painful misgivings of conscience, from which the person who does not thus act is exempt.

What two situations in life can afford a more striking contrast, than that of the person who feels at peace with God and man, and whose conscience brings the sweetest consolations of religion, and that of the person whose inward monitor continually rebukes him for his wayward wickedness, and dread and doubt embitter all the enjoyments of life. Say you that there is no misery attending the violation of the moral laws of nature? Ah, those mental agonies and torturings which overtake the transgressor, and plunge him into the torments of a mental hell, are the severest and most protracted sufferings which man can endure. How serene, how joyous, how happy, are the days of him who strictly conforms to the morality of true religion; how anxious, how unreconciled, how unhappy, are the days of him, who is continually haunted by the apparitions of his own wickedness, and tormented by the insatiable cravings of his perverted faculties and passions.

The pleasures of vice are peculiarly fleeting; the

sweetness of the indulgence soon passes away, but the bitterness of the consequent penalty leaves its permanent poisonous wound. Every vice is armed with deadly fangs, and the deluded victim grasps at the seductive pleasures which invest the serpent tempter with so many attractive charms, and the illusive pleasures and charms pass away with the fleeting hour, but the serpent has fixed his fangs in the heart of the victim. Plain, honest virtue assumes no fanciful garbs to conceal poisonous fangs, but loved for herself, her lovely charms and beauties become brighter and purer, as they pass through the crucible of life's cares and troubles; she has no treacherous sting concealed beneath vanishing beauties and fleeting pleasures, but she confers those substantial enjoyments which render human life the episode of eternal happiness. Man has often seen the gratifications of vice vanish with the hour; yet why does he still permit them to entice him on to his ruin and misery, and that too, while in full view of the only paradise which fallen humanity can enjoy, with its gates spread wide open, and within his reach, and all its enchanting pleasures inviting him to enter?

With each succeeding indulgence in vice, man yields easier to its temptations, each successive dissipation blunts his moral feeling, and adds deeper dye to the blackness of his heart, and thus, as he yields, he sinks lower and lower into the depths of misery and depravity, until exhausted nature sinks under the weight of accumulated miseries, and consigns the wretched clod of humanity to its mother dust, deeply contaminated with the woes of misdirected human life. Now look upon virtue. With each succeeding act it grows more pleasing, and the mind, imbibing the inspiring draughts, revels in the

most delightful and substantial enjoyments of life, until all the perverted appetites and evil passions which so dangerously beset humanity seem to be eradicated from its nature. How easy is it to be happy—how useless is it to be unhappy.

If we view man in the light of his actions, universal humanity appears to be an incomprehensible mixture of good and bad principles. Many individual members of the human family display these qualities and act in a manner which justly entitle them to the apppellation of moral and rational beings, and again, there are many others, whose actions in the most favorable light in which we can view them, will not entitle them to this appellation, but whose only object in life seems to be to delve into the deepest hell of human misery. Yet all this, so mysterious to the superficial observer, can not be mysterious to the student of nature. It is neither the result of the special dispensations of Providence, nor the haphazard happenings of chance, but it is the consequence of the operation of the unchanging laws of nature upon the circumstances produced by human conduct. It is the development of the human mind which determines the question of vice and virtue. If the mind is disciplined in error and false instruction, they start it adrift in the channels of vice; if it has received the impress of truth and substantial knowledge, the foundations of virtuous action are deeply and firmly laid.

The first lessons in vice must, necessarily, be very simple, and not require a great exercise of perverted faculties, for the virtuous mind is no more qualified to accomplish the huge monstrosities of vice than the untutored mind is to master the difficult abstractions of science. Every degraded wretch has seen the time when he would have startled with horror at

the very thought of acts which he now commits with the utmost indifference. In such cases, the pure and spotless mind at first receives the stains of slight indulgences, and becomes fascinated with the illusory pleasures, and thus it unconsciously drifts into the current of vice, and sinks through all its degrees, until it reaches the lowest depth of degradation and perversion. Vice steals the eye of reason, falsifies the guide of intelligence, and destroys the sagacity of judgment; and man, thus blinded and misdirected, grasps at the fleeting pleasures of vice, and is plunged into the depths of its miseries. Vice is not, then, the necessary result of human rationality. God did not arbitrarily design a part of the human family to be virtuous and a part to be vicious, but he has endowed all mankind with the faculties of rationality, and offers the rewards of virtue as the inducement to their proper exercise, and denounces the punishment of vice, to prevent their perversion; and hence, if human beings are determined to be unhappy, and persist in violating the laws of their Creator, which he has instituted for their welfare, it is not His fault, but their own.

These principles of nature, which are applicable to all vice, are especially applicable to the particular vice of Novel Reading. With each succeeding indulgence it fixes itself more firmly in the affections of the mind, and with each indulgence it yields more readily, until it becomes completely the slave of the fatal vice; and, as the mind is brought more and more under its fatal influence, it acquires an aversion for all virtuous effort, and turns with disgust from the real enjoyments of truth and substantial knowledge, to caress the feeling phantasms of romance, and to enjoy the pernicious and illusory pleasures of mental vice. Every virtue has its

opposing vice, and, as the cardinal virtue of the mind consists in the acquisition of truth and substantial knowledge, its opposing vice consists in indulging in exciting error and exaggerated fiction. Now, this has all the evil consequences which necessarily attend the practice of vice, and all its pleasures and enjoyments are fleeting and illusory, and none of those substantial benefits and enjoyments can result from it which can be derived only from the practice of virtue.

Having thus established the fact that Novel Reading is a vice, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that pleasures and enjoyments to be derived from it, can not possibly be equal to those to be derived from its opposite virtue, as the pleasures and enjoyments of life to be derived from the practice of vice, never can equal those to be derived from the practice of virtue. Hence its superlative folly. Like all other vices, it is practiced for the sake of its pleasure and excitement, but, as with all other vices, these vanish with the hour, but leave behind them their more lasting evil consequences. The Creator, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, has so instituted the scheme of nature, that man derives all his sweetest enjoyments from those acts which are morally right, and all his bitterest woes from those which are morally wrong. We have already demonstrated that true virtue consists in conforming to the requirements or principles of nature, and that vice consists in the violation of them, and also that all human happiness is derived from the practice of virtue, and that all human suffering and misery are the results of the practice of vice. Then, founding ourselves upon these incontrovertible principles, and proving that Novel Reading is a vice, it follows conclusively that it can not be the means

of promoting true happiness, but that its practice must inevitably produce suffering and misery. How faithfully is this verified by practical experience, where we see that habitual novel readers never accomplish any noble purpose in life, and, consequently, fail to enjoy any of its true and substantial pleasures; and, like the vitiated appetite of the intemperate dram-drinker, the perverted mind craves the unnatural stimulant, and when the excitement passes away, and the necessary reaction takes place, the victim suffers from severe attacks of the "blues," and thus life is painfully and uselessly whiled away amid the vexations and disappointments which necessarily attend the vain attempt to make a romance out of real life.

But how beneficial and substantial are the pleasures of true mental virtue. How pleasing to the virtuous mind to hold familiar converse with the great minds which have existed in the ages of time, to be inspired by their thoughts, to be moved by their feelings, and to be thrilled by their passions, while the soul revels in the pleasing emotions, and every selfish motive, every impure thought, and every vexation and trouble is banished from the mind, and it is held entranced by its own exquisite pleasures, roaming in the regions of unearthly delight, and drinking deeply at the purest fountains of true mental virtue. How ennobling to human nature, and how it soars above all the temptations which so sorely beset depraved humanity, and how it fortifies the mind with the strongest embattlements of virtue which all the cohorts of vice and misery shall not be able to overthrow.

It is a melancholy pleasure to trace the page of history, to behold, in the vision of the mind, the moving panorama of real events, and the inexorable work-

ings of nature's laws, to behold the emergings and submergings of the human race, as it has so often been deluged in the oceans of vice and misery, and, as it has so often appeared as if the race of Adam must irrecoverably sink under the weight of its own iniquities, to watch with anxious eye the great struggle upon the stage of human existence, and to behold the star of human progress rise in the midst of the brightening horizon of human improvement, and sink again frequently in floods of human gore, and rise again and struggle amid the impending clouds until it finally shines forth in the bright but not unsullied luster of the nineteenth century. How melancholy is the retrospect of human history. Man, in continual rebellion against his own true interests, perverting, with singular perverseness, every principle and motive which could conduce to his true happiness, his life has been one continual violation of the laws of nature, and, consequently, one continual scene of suffering and misery. No other animal that has ever inhabited the earth has been so prodigal in the shedding of blood, or committed such revolting actions, or heaped such accumulated mountains of misery and woe upon his fellow-animals.

Viewed in the light of his actions, it appears as if the earth was the arena of a vast amphitheater, in which men were let loose, like so many gladiators, to shed each other's blood, for the entertainment of the myriads of hell. In the light of the past, aggregated humanity appears to be less reasonable and humane than the beast of prey; for while they destroy only when it is necessary for their own existence, man sheds the blood of man, and leaves his prey to the devouring vultures, and the bones to whiten upon the plain, only to gratify his perverted and hellish passions. "Peace," says Segur, "is the

dream of the wise; war is the history of men; youth listens without attention to those who seek to lead it by the path of reason to happiness, and rushes with irresistible violence into the arms of the phantom which leads it, by the light of glory, to destruction."

If all this is necessarily so, what an unmitigated curse did God inflict upon man, when he endowed him with the faculties of rationality. Yet, who will say that it is so? The greatest gift that God bestowed upon man, the gift of rationality, is perverted by human conduct, until there results from it the greatest evils that ever afflicted the human race. Thus are God's most inestimable blessings converted by human conduct into man's direst curses. This is because the discipline or instruction by which the reason, intelligence, and judgment of the mind are formed, is false, and these false and pernicious principles being impressed upon the minds of each succeeding generation; each thus following the same false lights, is led into the same whirlpools of destruction which engulfed its predecessor. Thus, it is obvious that as the light of truth and virtuous knowledge breaks upon the mind of man, and he thus learns the principles of his nature, and what his true interests are, the gift of rationality will be directed to its true design, the promotion of substantial happiness, instead of, by its perversion, being the principal cause of all human suffering and misery.

The meek and lowly saint, who is the patron of every christian virtue, and the savage and blood-thirsty Tartar, who delights only in acts of blood and plunder, are not so because they are different species of man, but because they are differently educated. Man is not necessarily cruel and wicked, but he is endowed with stronger faculties and pas-

sions than any other earthly creature, and, therefore, when these faculties and passions are perverted and misdirected, they necessarily lead him into more monstrous vices and to the commission of more wicked deeds. When man shall become acquainted with himself, and understand the laws of his nature, and shall tread the paths of virtue in the full blaze of their light, and shall carefully eradicate from the discipline of the mind every withering influence, every impure sentiment, and every false principle; then, and not until then, will vice and folly be driven from the earth, and the spirit of true fellowship and brotherly love will dwell in the abodes of man.

But why should we specify the pleasures which attend the practice of mental virtue, the study of substantial truth? All the realms of reality are clustering with beauties; the tables of nature are spread upon every side, filled with sumptuous supplies of intellectual delicacies, and inviting every person freely to partake of the feast. But, alas, the mind which has been perverted by the excitement and error of exaggerated fiction, can not enjoy the pleasures of these mental festivals, but revolts at the very idea of such substantial food. How we pity them, as they turn again to pursue the fleeting pleasures of vice, only to catch its miseries, and thus deprive themselves of all the substantial pleasures and benefits which can be enjoyed only by the practice of sterling mental virtue

When we remember the firm hold which the vice of Novel Reading has obtained upon the affections of the people, and the consequences which necessarily flow from it, we must conclude that the evils which result from it are wide-spread, and of the most pernicious character. Like a moral gangrene, it is spreading itself over the living virtues of the mind.

Three hundred works of fiction, generally of the most exaggerated and worthless character, were published in the United States in the year 1856, and spread broadcast throughout the length and breadth of the land, to bring forth their pernicious fruits. In the language of the poet:

> "The story-telling tribe, alone outran
> All calculation far, and left behind,
> Lagging, the swiftest numbers: dreadful even
> To fancy, was their never ceasing birth;
> And room had lacked, had not their life been short."

It can not be surprising that an abundant crop of vice and folly should be produced by such an extensive sowing of error and exaggeration. Virtue, morality, religion, justice, every ennobling principle of human nature reels under the heavy blow. The young man who is just commencing the strife and contentions of life, and who has been faithful in his studies of romance, imagines that he has only to act romantically; that is, to plunge into all kinds of wild and extravagant adventures and visionary schemes, and some fortuitous accident or romantic train of events, remote, indeed, from the regular operations of nature, will shower down upon him all the enjoyments of position and wealth, and like a novel hero he will certainly end his trials and troubles amid the dazzling blaze of glory and honor. Alas, poor youth, old dame fortune comes hobbling along in her regular time, and shears off all his redundant vagaries to the very skin, and leaves him thus exposed to the bitter storms of life. It is an undoubted fact, that Novel Reading induces a thorough distaste for all the useful occupations of life, and, consequently, it has a decided tendency to lead to idleness; idleness leads to vice; vice ends in crime; and crime fills the pene-

tentiaries, and supplies the scaffold with its victims. Here, then, is the great manufacturing establishment which is daily engaged in the manufacture of loafers, vagabonds and fillibusters, and surely it is doing a most flourishing business.

But the most blighting evils of Novel Reading does not fall upon the sterner sex. It is the peculiar and engrossing vice of the softer sex. Woman is peculiarly controlled by her passions, which seek to entwine themselves around the object of her love, and blooming into the sweetest flowers of affection, they spread their enlivening fragrance into every sphere of life, expanding their lovely colors amid the sunshine of prosperity, and pouring the healing balms of consolation into the wounds which adversity inflicts. Woman being thus endowed, is the peculiar victim of Novel Reading. She eagerly quaffs the sparkling drops of exciting error, which, appealing directly to the strongest emotions of her nature, leads her very soul captive into the bewitching regions of fancy, and thus the fairest gem of God's creation, which he has placed as a shining light in the firmament of life, to light up the dreary walks of man, casts none of its enlivening radiance into the gloomiest valleys of reality. Thus she becomes a dreaming automaton like a lovely specter, moving amid the shades of time, while her soul is reveling in the fantastic visions of unreality, and like the rose which "wasting its fragrance upon the desert air," she is wasting upon ideal phantoms those loveliest passions and purest affections which were designed to sweeten the bitterest cups of real life.

Thus have we traced the evil consequences which result from novel reading. We have sought to found ourselves upon the immutable principles of nature, and from thence to trace these evils from their foun-

tain sources, and observe their pernicious influences as they spread themselves through the various relations of life. We have seen it fixing its error firmly in the mind, and holding undisputed sway over its purest affections, and controlling all those hidden springs which move the complicated and mysterious machine of humanity, secretly, and almost unrebuked, working out its pernicious effects; and while the unconscious victim, lured by its captivating charms, is thrown off its guard against any lurking danger, the specious and fascinating error has registered its false principles upon the susceptible tablets of the mind, and by its siren song lured it into the vortex of its ruin. As truth is the only compass which can guide the wanderer, upon the boundless ocean of humanity, into the harbors of success and happiness, so error, in every shape, is the counter-attraction which reverses the needle of the compass of life, and so leads the ill-fated mariner upon the shoals, and into the whirlpools of destruction. There is nothing which can so much conduce to a long life of usefulness and happiness, and so effectually display, in their native beauties, the charms and pleasures which attend the practice of virtue, as a mind well stored with those fundamental truths which underlie the very foundations of our existence, for every human undertaking which has not its corner-stone securely placed upon the immovable rock of eternal truth, must inevitably fail. Nothing, save the light of truth, can guide man to the accomplishment of his true destiny; how carefully, then, should we eradicate every false principle, and every pernicious influence which can obscure the light which is to guide us amid the troubled waves of time, and finally bring us to our eternal anchoring upon the right hand of the throne of God.

ESSAY IV.

THE FOLLIES OF FASHION.

MAN is naturally an imitative being. Through all the ages of his existence, in all conditions, and under all circumstances, he has continually displayed a natural propensity for imitation. But the means by which these propensities are gratified, in regard to a particular mode of dress, are not fixed or universal, but, on the contrary, they vary with every age and nation, and are, perhaps, the most ephemeral and fluctuating of all the transitory affairs of humanity. Each different age of the world has had its distinctive mode of dress, and each nation of people, in each of these different ages, has had its peculiar national costume. The costume of a people is a distinctive feature of independent nationality, and thus the purest motives of patriotism are not unfrequently intimately associated with the mode of dress. Indeed, it frequently happens, that long after that nationality has fallen under the fatal strokes of its destroyers, its unfortunate citizens devotedly cling to their peculiar costume, as the last lingering memento of their departed glory and prosperity. When this occurs, fashion and patriotism are very nearly synonymous, and fashion is purified by the chastening emotions of patriotism, and instead of leading its followers into deplorable vices and follies, it urges them to the accomplishment of those heroic deeds in defense of their

liberty, which constitute the only beauties upon which the virtuous mind loves to dwell amid all the horrors of human carnage and blood. Neither is it unfrequent that mode of dress becomes the symbol of religion and morality; but, in such cases, it becomes as plain and unchangeable as the principles of which it is symbolical.

Thus we see that fashion may even be exalted to grandeur and nobleness; that it may become an incentive which urges man to deeds of valor and patriotism, and to acts of religion and philanthropy. And as it is founded upon natural propensities of the mind, its proper gratification is one of the essential requisites of human happiness. Conforming, therefore, to the prevailing mode of dress, so far as that mode agrees with our independent tastes and desires, and exercising in a proper manner our own reason and judgment, is neither a folly nor a vice; but, on the contrary, it is a virtue. But yielding an unconditional obedience to all the demands of the prevailing fashion, and scrupulously adopting all its idle frivolities and useless absurdities, merely because they are fashionable, is a social slavery of the most despicable nature, and a vice which virtually deprives us of the blessings of our natural attributes, and falsifies our professions as a christian people.

Not only this, but the actual evils which necessarily result from such a course, have most ruinous effects upon the condition of society. It diverts the attention of the mind from the proper discharge of those serious and important duties of life, upon which all human enjoyments necessarily depend, and directs its attention to the practice of those superficial, external appearances which afford no gratification to any quality of human nature except its perverted propensities, and conceals beneath its glittering sur-

face no solid foundation upon which man can securely rest his happiness either for time or eternity. It is the inherent quality of all the sentiments and propensities of the human mind, that their proper exercise and development necessarily conduces to human happiness, and their improper gratification and perversion unavoidably produces misery and suffering. Now, as fashion is the effect of natural propensities of the mind, from the above principle it follows, conclusively, that their proper gratification will produce innocent pleasure and happiness; but that their excessive gratification or perversion is a sin against God in the light of nature, and inevitably leads to consequences destructive to human happiness.

It will be the object of this essay to demonstrate that this great law of human nature holds true, in regard to the imitative propensities of man, by pointing out some of the follies and evils which result from their perversion. But by the term fashion, we do not mean the present prevailing mode of dress only, but we claim the privilege of investigating it in relation to all those affairs of life in which a fixed conventional custom assumes the arbitrary jurisdiction of determining the mode of human conduct. If man is to act and think according to certain rules which are prescribed to him by a capricious tyrant, wherefore the use of those rational attributes with which his Creator has endowed him, and which enable him to think independently of all other influences, and which are the only proper guides to direct his action? It is unquestionably true, that just in the proportion that persons become fashionable, according to the modern acceptation of the term, just in that proportion they cease to be independent rational beings, and become the slaves of mere conventionality.

These points, startling as they may appear to the

smiling votary of fashion, we shall attempt to demonstrate in the progress of the investigation. But in doing so, it is not the intention to descend to the minute detail of all those gay frivolities and dazzling forms which flitter round the circles of fashion, shining for the moment with a false and glittering light, and receiving the admiration of all the innumerable hosts of fashion-worshipers, and in a very short time all their beauty vanishes before the frown of the fickle tyrant, and all his dutiful subjects, ever faithful to their ruler, discard, with the utmost disgust, that which they so lately regarded with unbounded admiration, and for the life of them can not see how any person of taste and accomplishment could admire any thing so old fashioned. Their existence is too ephemeral to admit of investigation, for, by the time their folly should be fairly exposed, they would themselves have passed away, and their places supplied by others of the same species, but of entirely different shapes, so that it would be necessary to commence anew, and thus they would continually evade our grasp. But we intend to regard these short-lived follies as being, in fact, too contemptible to merit serious investigation, and turn our attention directly to the consideration of the perversion of the faculties of the human mind from which they result, being confident that if the cause be removed the effect will be prevented.

Let us, in the first place, understand more distinctly the difference between the proper gratification and the perversion of the natural qualities of the mind, which constitute man an imitative being, and give him a natural inclination to conform to established modes and customs. As man is unquestionably endowed with these natural qualities, it is obviously his duty to afford them proper gratification, as much so

as it his duty to gratify any other faculty of the mind; but as these faculties are endowed with the inherent quality of all human faculties, that is, liability to perversion, the great question to determine is, where the proper gratification ends and where the perversion begins. Now, as man is naturally an imitative being, it is evident that it would not afford gratification to these faculties to act in a manner entirely contrary to the established modes and customs by which he is surrounded, and, therefore, their only legitimate source of gratification is in conforming to those modes and customs so far as this conformity can be rendered compatible with the proper exercise and gratification of all the other faculties of the mind, but beyond this he must not go, for the undue gratification of any faculty is its perversion, and destroys the even balance of the mind. Hence it is evident that all those persons who devote so large a portion of their time and attention to the fashions of the day, and are so scrupulously exact in the observance of all their vanities and frivolities, are not only wronging themselves by perverting their natural endowments, but they are most wickedly sinning against God. It is exceedingly to be regretted that so very large a portion of our professing christians must unavoidably be placed in this list.

When we say that man is an imitative being, we do not mean that he is an imitative being only, but that this is only one of the natural qualities of the mind, and not the only one, and that all these different qualities demand independent gratification, and that this special faculty only demands harmonious gratification in common with all the rest. Indeed, were man entirely an imitative creature, he would not be a rational being. But there is a certain quality in human nature which derives gratification from acting like

those by whom we are surrounded, yet we are endowed with other qualities, which when properly developed, are very painfully outraged when we do that which we know to be wrong, and this prevents the imitative propensities of human nature from leading us into irretrievable misery.

These imitative propensities are little more than unreflecting instincts, while those qualities which urge us to higher, nobler, and more independent conduct, are those faculties which really constitute man a moral and a rational being. But the moral and intellectual faculties of the mind, when all its faculties are developed in accordance with the requirements of its Creator, maintain a natural supremacy over all its other faculties, and therefore its lower propensities should be gratified under the guidance of the moral and intellectual sentiments. For as the moral and intellectual faculties of the mind constitute man a moral and a rational being, if he is not controlled in his conduct by these faculties, he is neither a moral nor a rational being. Hence, in the gratification of the propensities of imitation, we must be strictly guided by the dictates of the moral and intellectual faculties. Now, observe an instance of the nice balance of all the faculties of the mind, and how perfectly they are adjusted by the hand of God, for the accomplishment of good, when they are developed in accordance with the requirements of their own nature. The propensities for imitation urge us to act as others act, but acting under the guidance of the natural supremacy of the moral and intellectual faculties, these urge us to imitate that only which is good in others, and avoid that which they teach us is wrong, and their highest object is, to urge us to the accomplishment of good, independent of all imitation.

If the above principles be correct, we have a faith-

ful and reliable test to guide us in the proper gratification of these propensities. It is the test of reason. Let them be gratified under the guidance and control of the moral and intellectual faculties, and then we will follow the customs by which we are surrounded, so far as these faculties teach us they are right, but when they teach us that they are manifestly wrong, as many of the prevailing customs are, then we will act as independent, rational beings, and follow them no further.

Fashion is professedly and exclusively imitative; and it therefore excludes all exercise of the moral and intellectual faculties, and, in so far, destroys the rationality of man. Nor is this all. By becoming thus exclusively imitative we adopt all the wrongs and evils of fashion, for to become fashionable is to blindly follow the prevailing modes and customs, and thus we yield our independent rationality and become the willing slaves of the most inexorable and capricious of all tyrants. We may adopt any fashion which the gratification of our imitative propensities may require, and which the moral and intellectual faculties, as the supreme directors of all our conduct, decide to be right and proper, but to adopt any fashion, merely because it is the fashion, without the exercise of these higher faculties, reverses the scheme of human nature, and is, therefore, wrong in principle, no difference how innocent the fashion may be within itself. Therefore, following the prevailing modes and customs, so far as they receive the sanction of our moral and intellectual attributes, is the proper gratification of the imitative qualities of the human mind; but following the fashion, merely because it is the fashion, is the perversion of these qualities, and tends to destroy the rationality of man, and is, therefore, contrary to the will of God.

And when the exercise of the higher attributes of our nature teaches us that a fashion is frivolous and wrong, they will also provide us with a substitute when it is essential to our welfare, which it is our bounden duty, in the sight of God and man, to adopt, and brave the jeers of public delusion and error, and renounce our allegiance to this fickle and arbitrary despot, and take our positions boldly and bravely as independent, rational beings.

Fashion sways a despotic scepter over the most extensive dominions, and numbers among its faithful subjects the greatest number of persons of any tyrant which has ever governed the affairs of man. It is a despotism which is almost coeval and coextensive with the existence of man. As far back in the hoary ages of antiquity as any historic ray illuminates the annals of man, we may observe the traces of his arbitrary government. Nor is his sway confined to mere external appearances and outward conduct, but he has fastened his fetters even upon the intellectuality of man. It seems to be a quality of the human mind, at least as it has existed under the adverse influences which have been exerted upon it, in all prior periods of human history, that when once it has accepted an idea, it clings to it with a fondness and a jealousy which precludes the effort of unbiased reflection, and thus effectually prevents it from employing those means with which its Creator has provided it, to enable it to protect itself against the insidious approaches of error. Hence, when error has once taken up its position in the mind, it is one of the most difficult of all tasks to rout it from its secure lodgement.

Man seems to be attached to his doctrines and opinions, not because he is, in his own understand-

ing, thoroughly convinced of their truth, but because they have received the sanction of venerable ages, and are those which have been entertained by his worthy progenitors. They are treated too much as though they were hereditary property, which is transmitted from progenitor to descendant from generation to generation; and each succeeding generation receiving the doctrines and principles of its predecessor, as it were upon trust, and accepting them as a matter of course, and not daring to submit them to the test of reasonable investigation. It is true, that man is continually progressing in the investigation of truth, and discarding old and erroneous doctrines, and accepting those which are true, but this is because all men are not bound by the fetters of custom, and, disdaining to be mere imitative creatures, make a noble effort at true rationality, and seek to know what is true, instead of what men believe to be true, and thus go boldly forth to battle in the cause of truth, amid the jeers and clamors of a fashion-serving world. And when one of these bold warriors advances the standard of truth, and strikes terror into the legions of venerable error, the whole world is in arms to expel this new invader into the regions where error has always maintained undisputed sway.

Truth is eternal, and the truth which was proclaimed by the antediluvians, and that which is elicited to-day, should alike receive the veneration and guide the conduct of man; but the error of all ages is to be alike condemned, and the error which Abraham and Moses believed, for they were not entirely free from error, is not entitled to any more respect than that which misleads us of to-day; nor should the human doctrines which profess to be founded in truth, be exempted from investigation,

because our fathers and great-grandfathers believed them to be true. Truth loves investigation, error alone fears it, and therefore those doctrines and principles which take shelter behind their venerableness to screen them from the searching eye of reason and investigation, should only thereby fix upon themselves the suspicion of error. Because custom and common belief, without reflection or investigation, fixes and determines the doctrines and principles of so large a portion of mankind, is the very reason why so much error has always been mingled in the cardinal doctrines and principles of human knowledge.

Most persons receive their ideas of truth from what they are taught by others, and believe they are true because they are told so, and not because their own reason has convinced them of it, and thus they all follow in the same prescribed course, believing such doctrines and principles as are sanctioned by custom; and thus error is transmitted from generation to generation, safely protected from attacks of reason and investigation. Why not relieve ourselves of the shackles of custom, and, instead of believing doctrines to be true, merely because they are the prevailing opinions of the times, believe the truth of such only as can stand the test of calm and serious reason and faithful investigation. But instead of this we must think fashionably or not at all; for if we do not acquiesce in the principles and doctrines of popular belief we are regarded as a heretic, or an infidel, or some other dangerous kind of person, and we must withstand the clamors and persecutions of all the hosts of fashion-servers. Thus, thought itself, so far as the votaries of fashion may be said to think, is confined within the prescribed channels of custom. We have only to look

into the annals of the past to observe that thought has, in all ages, been subject to the despotism of custom. The fondness and tenacity with which men have clung to their cherished follies and errors, and the implicit faith and confident reliance which they have placed in the truth of the grossest absurdities and strangest aberrations which could be fabricated by misguided men, proves conclusively that this despot has exercised absolute authority over the dominions of the mind.

When we calmly reflect upon many of the absurd doctrines which large portions of mankind have, in different ages of the world, confidently believed to be true, we are astonished that the human mind could be so deluded and so misguided as to yield them its assent. It would seem that a single original and unbiased effort of the mind would disclose to its view the glaring errors and absurdities which had mislead it by assuming the guise of truth. But alas, the eye of reason is sealed by custom, and its votaries grope their way in mental blindness, amid the most naked errors and delusions, without being able to see them, and believe every body else is wrong who does not believe like themselves. They do not boldly and independently exercise those rational powers with which their Creator has endowed them to enable them to elicit truth and detect error, but act as though their minds were created for nothing more noble than to answer the purpose of a common storehouse, in which to deposit all the error and mental rubbish which can be manufactured by perverted rationality. Thus thought is reduced to a state of vassalage, and the mind, being deprived of its defenses against error, and being thus defenseless, and constantly subjected to the approaches of error, it easily enters and takes possession of the

mind. Hence it is that man has in all ages sincerely and confidently believed doctrines and opinions the most grossly absurd and unreasonable. He has received them at the dictation of custom, and neglected to avail himself of the only means by which he can protect himself against delusion and imposition, that is, by appealing to his own reason, judgment, and intelligence, to decide the important question of their truth. And as this is the only means by which he can protect himself against error, he must continue to be the dupe and victim of error, as long as he neglects to avail himself of the aid of his own independent rationality.

It can not be a subject of surprise, then, that so much gross error and delusion have been mingled with the doctrines and opinions which have been entertained by men. How can it be expected that doctrines and opinions should be reasonable when reason is not employed in their formation? How can it be expected that they should be true, when the only guide to truth is entirely disregarded? The history of past creeds and opinions proves that man may be made to believe just any thing that he is required to believe, for it is impossible for the imagination to conceive a greater variety of gross and unreasonable superstitions and absurdities than have actually been seriously and candidly believed to be true by large portions of mankind in different ages of the world. If the formation of doctrines and opinions is to consist of a kind of mechanical operation, as it does when people receive them already manufactured by custom, it matters little to them what they believe, and they can believe one thing just as well as an other. They believe whatever is offered them for belief by the prevailing custom. If it offers them paganism, they believe paganism; if it

offers them christianity, they believe christianity; and, as already said, no doctrine has ever yet been conceived so absurd that it could not find plenty of confident believers, and it has not unfrequently happened that the more absurd and unreasonable a doctrine was, the more numerous and devoted have been its believers.

This results from the fact that man has been in the habit of receiving his doctrines and principles already manufactured by custom, and whatever happens to be the prevailing belief, he adopts as his own without submitting it to the test of his own individual rationality. Hence, out of the materials of the human mind, which in all ages and in all nations have consisted of the same fundamental faculties, have been manufactured all the different kinds of humanity which have existed in the world. The heathen and the christian are made out of precisely the same kind of material. There is no radical and fundamental difference in the natural qualities of a Yankee and of a Hottentot. All mankind have the same inborn natural faculties, but they exist in different degrees of strength, and in different states of development. Just reverse all the circumstances, and, in the course of a very few generations, the christian people would become devoted heathens, and the Hottentot would become a successful dealer in wooden nutmegs. Hence it is the customs of a people which shape their destiny, and whatever those customs are, either in belief or in conduct, they are strictly adopted, and followed with all their errors and absurdities, by the unreflecting masses of the people.

To this general principle of human nature there can be found no exception in the history of man. The great changes which take place in the prevailing

customs of belief are effected by slow degrees and by the operation of powerful causes. Those who stand forth and boldly fight the errors and superstitions of popular belief, are generally crushed by the almost irresistible force of custom. The first advocates of an important truth or reformation almost invariably meet with nothing but denunciation and persecution, and their teachings fall without effect among the unthinking multitudes. But the new principles are at first adopted by a few of those persons who are independent of the ruling tyrant, and slowly gain strength until they gradually supplant the old customs, and themselves assume the scepter of despotism, and rule the popular mind with an absolute sway. The history of man represents him in all ages as clinging to his established errors and superstitions with the most perverse attachment, and engaged in deadly opposition to those who are maintaining the cause of truth in its struggle with error.

Galileo was subjected to protracted abuse and persecution because he maintained the theory of the earth's revolution. It was contrary to the doctrines of customary belief. The fanatics declared that it impeached the truth of the Bible, and he was arraigned before a christian tribunal, and only escaped the horrors of the Inquisition by retracting what they decided to be an abominable heresy. But although they had forced a retraction from him, yet he was so inspired with the truth of his theory, that he exclaimed, even in the presence of his judges, "yet it moves." Although in the present age men are free from the terrors of torture and persecution, yet they are not free from the fetters of mental bondage. They still glide along in the sweeping current of popular belief, and although public opinion may contain much truth, yet, at the same time, it contains

much error, and it is the duty of every rational being to exercise, independently of customary belief, those faculties of reason with which his Creator has endowed him, to enable him to arrive at truth, and to be guided by their light and aid amid the doubt and darkness of error.

Nor is the despotism which custom exercises over thought more absolute or extensive than its sway over the conduct of men. Man, viewed in this respect, presents the appearance of a vast machine, of which fashion is the moving power. He moves as it moves him. It prescribes the precise course which he is to follow, and he follows it with scrupulous exactness. If the dictates of his own rationality should prompt him to act in a manner differing from the established custom, he shudders at the thought of the staring gaze, and idle gossip, and slander of the hosts of fashion-servers, and thus he is lashed back into his servitude. The votary of fashion never questions its right to control him in all his conduct, nor thinks of asserting his own independence. Upon this subject he claims no right to think, but only aims to ascertain what it is that fashion requires; this known, his duty is clear, he yields a willing and scrupulous obedience. What difference does it make whether it be right or wrong, reasonable or unreasonable? What, if it is contrary to the laws of health or morality? What, if it is contrary to the will of God as revealed in his Word and his work? All these matters are of trifling consequence when they come in opposition to the omnipotence of fashion.

The votaries of fashion sacrifice health, happiness, principle, religion, and even life itself, all, in order to enable them to pay homage and fealty to their

sovereign despot. Even the professors of religion can, with apparent pride, violate the precepts of their religion in this respect, even while engaged in the very act of worship; thus professing religion, but practicing fashion. It certainly indicates a strange perversity of human nature that man should be more scrupulous in the observance of these vain and frivolous appearances than he is in the performance of those essential duties upon which his happiness depends, both as a mortal and as an immortal being. Were man as faithful in the practice of these essential duties, as he is in the practice of the vanities and follies of fashion, how much more enjoyment and happiness there would be in the world, and how much less suffering and misery. Did man strive as earnestly to conform his conduct to the requirements of truth and virtue as he does to conform it to the requirements and notions of the prevailing customs, how much purer would the light of morality and religion shine forth. Were he as eager to clothe his mind with the principles which adorn and elevate humanity as he is to clothe his body with the gaudy trappings of fashion, how many human beings would smile in happiness and joy who now weep in sorrow and despair. Were he as desirous to walk in the paths of virtue and righteousness as he now is to follow the empty fashions of the day, how many more men and women would we have, and how many less human butterflies.

The duties which he thus neglects are those upon which depend all the real pleasures of life, while the gay, gaudy, fleeting vanities and arts of fashion, which enlist his most earnest efforts, only blunt the finest feelings of our nature, and infuse a cold artificiality into all the transactions of life. What can be more chilling than the pretended acts of kindness

and friendship which are prompted by fashion. They are merely the images of friendship, dressed in the artificial garb of deceitfulness. They fall like a chilling frost upon the warm and affectionate heart, blighting all its most lovely beauties. True affection languishes and dies in the fetters of fashion. Affection is the purest gem of the human soul. Fashion is the most giddy folly of human frailty. Affection is a virtue which might adorn an angel. Fashion is a vice which should shame even perverted humanity. Affection is the offspring of sincerity and truth. Fashion is the child of hypocrisy and error. All that affection loves, fashion hates. How, then, are they to dwell together in harmony? Ah, when fashion takes possession, the spirit of true affection takes its flight, and leaves the mind the poisoned fountain of smiling hypocrisy and formal deceitfulness. Hence the selfishness, deceitfulness, and hard-heartedness which pervades fashionable society.

Man may control his tongue, or his countenance, but over the emotions and impulses of his mind he has no control. He may corrupt and pervert his mind, and as it is ennobled or debased its emotions and impulses are pure or impure. But while he has complete control over the condition of his mind, the emotions and impulses which result from that condition are natural consequences which, of course, he can not control. But the tongue and countenance are his dutiful servants. The tongue may chatter flippant nonsense, or utter base falsehood, and the countenance may be beaming with smiles or overcast with frowns, at his pleasure. Hence, they are no fair exponents of the internal workings of the mind. The impulses of the mind are directed by the hand of its Creator; and, therefore, they

result in natural order; but the giddy tongue and deceitful countenance may be directed by fashion; and, therefore, they may be false and capricious. The votaries of fashion bow and smile by rule. They smile and flatter while they hate and despise. The smile which is beaming upon the countenance is not the sunshine of the soul. The meaningless compliments which are coined by the false tongue are not the sentiments of the mind. While virtue and integrity imperatively demand that the expressions of the tongue and countenance shall be in harmony with the sentiments of the mind, the smiles and flattery of the votary of fashion are too often, and not without reason, only the objects of distrust and suspicion. Thus man becomes false to himself and to his fellow-man, and becomes a mere feather, buffeted about by the shifting breezes of custom.

It is an indisputable fact that excessive fashionableness defeats the proper development of the mind. Not only does it injuriously hamper the moral and intellectual faculties, but the baseness and deception which are the inseparable companions of fashion-following, corrupt and debase these faculties, and thus render them subservient to its own base purposes. Thus are the only faculties which can constitute man an independent rational being, wrought into the fetters which enslave him. Yet, those who make the most ostentatious professions of morality are almost invariably those who are the most obsequious observers of fashion. Our most fashionable people are the members of our churches. They are more particular in the observance of the rules of fashion, than they are in fulfilling the requirements of true morality. They are more solicitous to decorate their bodies with fashionable garments than they are to adorn their minds with true moral principles.

True morality consists in discharging the essential duties of life, in the manner taught by a properly developed and untrammeled moral and intellectual nature; fashionable morality consists in imitating the prevailing morality by going through the motion, while the real acts are of very questionable morality. All excessive fashionableness is in violation of the principles of true morality, because it subverts the natural supremacy of the moral and intellectual sentiments, and debases man into an aping creature, blindly and unreasonably following the prescriptions of custom, instead of acting as an independent rational being, guided by the dictates of his moral and intellectual nature. These principles being correct, and if man is really a moral being, they are irrefutable, then every person becomes immoral by becoming fashionable. Yet the absurd and frivolous fashionableness which is absorbing so large a portion of the attention of the present excessively fashionable age, is lovingly united in the bonds of the most intimate friendship and association with the purest and most approved morality of the day.

Morality has become a subservient principle, and like our garments, there is very little demand for any kind except such as is gotten up according to the latest fashion. The principles which constitute the prevailing morality, are those only which have received the approval of fashion, and as it has been shown that the excessive fashionableness of the age is founded in vice and error, it is not unreasonable to conclude that these principles of morality are not entirely devoid of its failings. The votaries of fashion have no test, except fashion, to decide the question of right and wrong. They unhesitatingly commit all those acts which fashion endorses, and scrupulously avoid all those which are not at present

in her favor. It causes them deeper mortification to violate some of the frivolous follies of fashion, than to neglect the performance of the most important duties of life. Persons may openly violate the most important conditions of their nature, and even the essential doctrines and principles of religion, and it will not startle a single tongue of fashion; but let them deviate from what fashion at the moment requires, and soon a thousand gibbering tongues are engaged in the fashionable enjoyment of gossiping.

Are, then, the immutable laws and principles which were instituted by the Author of nature so trifling, and the fleeting frivolous vanities of fashion so important to man? Are we to rely upon such a guide to direct us in the moral journey of life? If we are to accept fashion as the standard which is to establish the principles of morality, those principles change oftener than the moon. What it decided to be right but a few weeks ago, it decides to be wrong to-day. Can true morality be thus changeable? Far from it, indeed. The principles of true morality are eternal, and the generation of to-day is bound by the same moral code which bound the generation of Moses. This morality is founded upon the eternal rock of nature. And while it is thus calm and unchangeable as the existence of God, "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever," fluctuating custom has enjoined more different kinds of morality upon man than he has lived generations. He who made the heavens and the earth and the fullness thereof, has established but one system of morality to govern his human creatures in all the ages of time; but capricious custom has prescribed the same system of morality to no two generations of all the ages of the world. The one is the institution of Divine Omnipotence, the other is the creature of human folly. Human custom might

as well try to swerve the earth from its orbit, as to vary the principles of this eternal morality, which, as God is unchangeable, will remain the same in time and in eternity.

But how is man to be considered a rational being, while right in the face of reason, and contrary to its most obvious dictates, he forsakes the pursuit of the most substantial pleasures and enjoyments of life, and with an earnestness which, if properly directed, would certainly secure his happiness, pursues the most fleeting and frivolous of all human follies? Is he not endowed with reason to teach him, and has he not had experience to prove to him the utter insufficiency of fashionable follies to answer any of the important purposes of life; or to contribute any of the essential means of true happiness? And we may be truly thankful to the great Author of nature that the essential principles from which all permanent human happiness is to be derived, are founded upon a more solid basis. Indeed, were it true that substantial happiness could be derived from the practice of fashionable follies, then it would be true that human happiness is not to be attained by fulfilling the requirements of the laws of nature, but by their violation that it is not the reward of the harmonious exercise and development of all the faculties of our nature, but of their excesses and perversion, that it does not follow as a natural consequence of obedience to the will of God, but of disobedience. For it has been shown that excessive fashionableness is a perversion of our natural faculties, and thus a violation of the laws of our nature; and hence if these are the means by which true happiness can be attained, it is the first duty of man to pervert his nature, and act in direct opposition to the will and de-

signs of his Creator. The word and the works of God teach us that happiness is the reward of virtue; fashion teaches us that it can only be enjoyed in the practice of follies and vices.

But how is it that man, being a rational being, can be misled and deluded by follies and vices the errors and evils of which are exposed by his every-day experience? It certainly does not require a very high state of rationality, together with the testimony of every act of life, to teach us that all our substantial pleasures and enjoyments are derived from the practice of virtue, and that all the illusory pleasures, which are derived from excessive gratifications or vice, pass away with the moment's indulgence, and desert us at the very moment that we are arraigned before the tribunal of offended nature, to receive her judgment. And it certainly requires less rationality to teach us that the excessive fashionableness which has seized and controls the mind of the present age, has a practical tendency to transform man from a rational to an instinctive and imitative being, and is a vice in the strictest sense of the term. Hence it follows conclusively that fashion being a vice, can not confer any substantial benefits or enjoyments upon its votaries, but as, in all other vices, those who practice it must inevitably suffer the penalties which nature inflicts upon those who violate her laws.

But, because these results do not manifest themselves in some of those forms which society has been accustomed to condemn, the monitors of the public morality have entirely overlooked their evils, and the practice of this vice is at present thought to be not inconsistent with the practice of the purest piety and virtue. One person may ruin his health by the intemperate use of ardent spirits, and the whole community very properly condemns such a

course of conduct, and another may destroy his by fashionable excesses, and immediately he becomes an object of public sympathy, and his misfortunes are attributed to the inscrutible dispensations of God, thus charging the Creator with the sins of his creatures. If a man destroy the energies of his constitution by indulgence in any vice, which it is customary to condemn, it is obvious to every person that he has committed a great wrong, but if a woman destroy hers by fashionable dressing or fashionable eating, or by any other fashionable vice, she nor society does not for a moment imagine that she has in the slightest degree transgressed the principles of right or morality.

Now, according to the morality of nature, the person who destroys his health, by fashionable excesses is just as guilty as the person who destroy his by those excesses which men are accustomed to condemn. But society regards the one as an abandoned reprobate, an outcast of humanity upon whom the immaculate fashion-servers look with the utmost contempt and disdain, without the slightest suspicion of the beam which is in their own eye, while it regards the other as the brightest ornament of society, and a paragon of virtue and morality. We would not have society condemn the grosser vices any less than it does, but would have it protect itself against the evils of vice in all its shapes. We would not have one vice bitterly denounced, and another countenanced and encouraged by society, merely because one is fashionable and the other unfashionable. Any system of morality is essentially unsound which permits vice to take refuge behind the bulwarks of fashion, and there not only rest in unmolested security, but actually receive the aid of society in promoting its evil results, and while the unsuspecting victims

are fondly caressing the pet vice, it strikes its poisoned fangs to the heart.

It is believed that the truth is not hazarded by the assertion, that there is more suffering, disease, and death produced by the practice of fashionable vices than there is by indulgence in condemned vices. It is true that the latter produce more gross immorality, but their empire is always more confined, and they have to make their attacks upon the fortifications of virtue and morality, under the vigilant watch and determined opposition of the whole moral community, while the fashionable vices extend their empire over almost the entire human family, and attack the health and happiness of their subjects, while they fancy they are securest from danger, and conseqently unwarned of the approaching evils. While society entertains these fashionable vices with the most generous hospitality, they secretly and treacherously rob their patrons of their most sacred and invaluable treasures.

It is a fact so notorious that it only requires to be stated to be admitted, that excessive fashionableness invariably deteriorates and enfeebles the physical capacities of man. We have only to look upon the living panorama of real life, as it moves before us every day, in order to obtain the most conclusive evidence of this fact. Look into the circles of fashion and behold what a scene of physical degeneracy. There we find man, and especially woman, debilitated; feebly tottering along the journey of life; groaning under an undue amount of suffering and disease, amid all the modish elegance and gaudy flippery of art and vanity; the mere shadow of what humanity is when it is developed in accordance with the requirements of nature. Do we not find disease and physical debility more generally

prevalent among the higher classes of society, where the reign of fashion is more supreme than among the lower? Let every person be so kind as to compare in his own mind the physical condition of those who are so highly favored as to be able to become fashionable in our modern way of fashionable living, and are so extremely fortunate as to have nothing else to do but to sacrifice their health and lives to its vanities and follies; compare these with those who are so very unfortunate as to be deprived of these high privileges, and are prevented by stern necessity from indulging in these excesses, and are forced by the demands of nature to take that virtuous exercise which the laws of their nature require. Do we not find the one class more generally vigorous and healthy, and the other more feeble, and, consequently, more liable to complicated disease? Yet the lower classes are not, by any means, devoid of vice; on the contrary, they generally practice those vices which society most condemns, and which, of course, have their pernicious effects; yet, as actual experience and real life prove, these unfashionable vices do not have as disastrous effects upon the human constitution as those which are fashionable.

Why is it that the lower classes, as a general rule, enjoy more vigorous physical constitutions than the higher classes of society? Is it because they are different species of the human race? Is it because of any arbitrary natural distinction? Neither. It is because, in the present constitution of society, the higher the class the more fashionable it is, and it is ordained, by the unalterable fiat of nature, that disease and suffering shall punish all the follies and vices of man; and his fashionable vices and follies are the greatest which he practices, and, consequently, produce the most disastrous effects. It is

because fashion and nature prescribe different modes of conduct to man, and those who follow the former are held strictly amenable to the laws of the latter. It is because God has made honest labor the source of all substantial human enjoyment, and the fountain of purity and virtue; while fashion considers virtuous effort to be disgraceful to the person of taste and accomplishment, thus establishing the monstrous and abominable doctrine that it is disgraceful to man to conform to the will of his Creator. Can any thing be more monstrous than the founding principle of modern fashion, which requires, that in order to be a lady or a gentleman before the eyes of men, it is necessary to become an unpardonable sinner in the sight of God.

God has required honest labor at the hands of man as the first condition of his earthly existence, and, consequently, the Creator has adopted all the means by which human happiness can be secured to this fundamental law of nature. But fashion does not like this arrangement, and so she raises the standard of rebellion, and says that those who are vulgar enough to wish to stand high in the favor of God may labor if they choose, but those who wish to stand high in her favor must not labor at any of the most essential occupations of life. God says to man, Work! but fashion says not so; it is disgraceful for a respectable man to work; none but the vulgar and low-born work under my rule: thus the serfs in the kingdom of fashion will be the nobility in the kingdom of God. But God does not say, work to accumulate unnecessary stores of wealth, and to inflict evil upon your fellow-beings; this is vicious effort; but work to secure your own true happiness, and to promote that of others; this is virtuous effort; therefore, all those who labor at

the essential occupations of life do not thereby serve God, but are too often only making desperate efforts to serve fashion.

Now virtuous labor, or the proper exercise of all the mental and physical capacities of man, being a fundamental law of human nature, and God having adjusted all the conditions of human happiness to this law, it follows that all the arrangements of man which violate this law are inherently vicious, and consequently produce suffering and misery. How vicious, then, is fashion, when it proscribes as most disgraceful and degrading to man those occupations which are most essential to human happiness, and even to human existence. And, again: how vicious is it when it receives with the highest favor those occupations which are not essential to human happiness or existence, but, on the contrary, exert a most pernicious influence upon both. It really seems that the single fact, that fashion regards as degrading to man, many of those employments which are within themselves necessarily honest and virtuous, and regards as most honorable and ennobling those occupations which are wrong and sinful, and can not be justified by the principles of true virtue, should convince every rational being that the fashion of the age is founded in wickedness and sin, and that it is the first duty of every moral and religious person, instead of following in its lead, to join in the warfare against its power.

It is a fact which no one dare deny, that if a person engage in the more humble and honest occupations of life, those occupations upon which human existence itself depends, and from which we derive our most substantial pleasures and enjoyments, that person is considered disgraced and degraded, and must occupy a position in the scale of respectability

far below the idle, useless, worthless drone of fashion. Those who produce with their own hands the necessaries which sustain human life, and add to the comforts and enjoyments of man, are not respectable; but those who speculate upon these necessaries, and thus extort their ill-gotten gains from the suffering consumers, are in the highest degree respectable. No rectitude of intention, no honesty of purpose, nor the practice of the most commendable virtue and morality, can save the honest producers and workers among mankind from their impending doom. They are fulfilling the demands of nature, and violating the requirements of fashion, and, consequently, they are not persons of taste and respectability; and the only way that they can become respectable is to become fashionable, and cease to contribute to, and commence preying upon, the welfare of humanity. They are subject to the laws of nature, which enjoin labor upon man, while the votaries of fashion have exempted themselves from this law, and regard themselves as a superior class of persons merely because they are violating the will of God and the laws of nature. This we should call the aristocracy of sin and the nobility of wickedness.

Ceaseless action is the first law of nature. Nothing remains permanently stationary in all the creation of God. Every thing must advance or retrograde, flourish or decay; and, while every thing by which man is surrounded is thus in ceaseless action, why should he seek to detach himself from the perpetual motion of the universe, while every thing else in nature is marching onward in obedience to the will of its great Author, and fulfilling the high purposes of creation, why should man lie listlessly by, idle, useless, worthless? Can he imagine that the noble attributes with which he is endowed are with-

out an important design? Can he suppose that God has breathed the impetus of action into all his other creations, and left this, the master-piece of all his earthly workmanship, without any agency to perform except that of a useless drone and idler, hanging like a dead weight upon the moving machinery of the universe? Yet such a being is the beau-ideal of human perfection, according to the fashionable notions of the age. The more he is enabled to escape honest effort by trickery and wrong, and to evade the requirements of God, the more worthy he considers himself. The highest state of felicity and respectability which man can reach, according to modern notions, is to be placed in such a situation that he is not obliged to contribute any effort to the production of the necessaries of human existence and welfare, and to be able to extravagantly consume and destroy those which have been produced by the honest efforts of others.

But while the prevailing customs of the day are thus founded in the false principles that man is degraded by the discharge of those duties which are most essential to his being, and that the extravagant loafers and drones of community are its most respectable members, they are guilty of still greater sins and wickedness. If fashion permits its votaries to engage in active occupation of any kind, it generally recommends to them those kinds of employments which contribute least to the happiness of mankind; and not only this, but, if we seriously investigate their influence upon society, we shall find that those occupations which are regarded as most respectable in the circles of fashion, are those which are most condemned by the principles of true virtue and religion. According to these principles, an employment is respectable just in the proportion that it

contributes to the happiness and welfare of the human race, and it is disrespectable just in proportion to its tendency to produce suffering and misery. Of course, if we were to throw aside all fashion and false notions, we would entertain the highest regard for those who contribute most to our enjoyment and happiness, and regard with the greatest abhorrence those whose efforts produce the greatest evils. Certainly the benefactors of mankind should receive its respect and gratitude, its malefactors should be spurned from respectable society.

But the very reverse of this too often obtains where fashion rules. Those who confer the greatest benefits upon mankind are too frequently those who are regarded with the least respect, and who endure the greatest wrongs and oppressions, while those who receive its highest respect and favor are often those who prey upon its happiness and welfare. Those who produce the necessaries of life are considered as the least respectable portion of mankind, while those who contribute nothing to human happiness, or those who recklessly gamble in these necessaries, and who add nothing to their real value, or to their qualities for supplying the wants of humanity, but who amass them together in unnecessary quantities, and withhold them from the purposes for which nature designed them, or destroy them in useless extravagance, these are considered superior to the former class, and it really would seem for no other reason but that they inflict injuries upon the human race, while the producing class confer benefits. This is analogous to the principle which has prevailed in all ages, of considering the greatest butchers of the human race as its greatest men; and mankind has always bestowed its gratitude and respect upon these

human butchers just in proportion to the number of human beings they have slaughtered.

How false, then, are the fashionable distinctions which are made in society. They are not founded in justice, in virtue, in morality, or in religion. They are not pointed out by the finger of God, nor traced upon the face of nature. Are not the humbler occupations, which produce the necessaries of life, and which are so degrading in the sight of fashion, are they not perfectly honest and virtuous? And shall the practice of virtue and honesty be discreditable to man? Do not these occupations comprise the most essential duties of life, and shall man be disgraced by their faithful discharge? Has not God strictly enjoined them upon man, and shall man be degraded by obeying the will of God? But are many of the employments which fashion considers as most honorable and respectable to man, as they are fashionably practiced, are they consistent with the principle of true morality and religion? If they are not consistent with these principles, how can their practice render man more respectable? How can the practice of injustice and immorality ennoble human nature?

Mankind has become accustomed to look with contempt upon humble integrity, and to smile upon glittering, fashionable dishonesty. Nothing could have a stronger tendency to discourage the practice of virtue, and to plunge the race into vice. Every honest effort carries within itself inherent virtue, and vice is inseparably connected with every dishonest effort; and this is equally true in regard to the conduct of the humblest citizen and the proudest aristocrat. The humbleness of an effort will not mar its loveliness in the sight of God, and all the glittering pomp of fashion can not conceal from the

eye of Omnipotence the native ugliness of an immoral or an unjust act. Although human fashion may test the respectability of occupations by the test of its own false principles, and decide that they are ennobling or degrading to man according to its prevailing caprices, yet before the bar of God the respectability of action is tested by a different standard, and the fashions which there prevail are the principles of eternal truth and eternal justice. The integrity, virtue and morality of an action are the only true tests of its respectability, and the follies and vices of peasants and princes are equally wrong. Let it be remembered, then, that it is not the fashionableness or unfashionableness of an effort which constitutes its true merit, nor yet its exaltedness or humbleness in the opinions of men, but its honesty of purpose, and its effect upon the welfare and happiness of the human race. Let us all, therefore, honestly and faithfully discharge those duties which God requires at our hands, in whatever sphere of life our lot may be cast, and although the discharge of honest duty may degrade us in the estimation of the fashionable world, let us receive encouragement from the reflection that in that world, where man receives his final reward, humble honesty is not disgraceful, nor fashionable viciousness respectable.

But it may be said that a large portion of those whom fashion excludes from respectable circles, are not morally respectable; that those who are employed in the humbler and more essential occupations of life, are not qualified, in a moral and intellectual capacity, to associate in the higher circles of life. This, in the present state of the human race, is true. But why is this so? Is it the result of any natural institution? Is it the work of God or man? It re-

sults from the false constitution of society, and this constitution of society results from the prevailing customs of man, so that fashion itself is to blame for that for which it proscribes, and condemns the humbler classes of community. Why are the humbler classes more degraded as moral and intellectual beings? Is it because they are a different species of the human race? Has God created as many different kind of human beings as there are classes among men? Not so. He has created but one kind of human beings, and that is man, and this man is endowed with the natural attributes of a moral and an intellectual being. These attributes exist in different degrees of strength and action, but there is no human being of sound mind and body, but who, if he faithfully discharge all the duties which his Creator requires at his hands, and properly exercises and develops all the natural functions with which he is endowed, may become a respectable, moral and intellectual being, worthy to associate in the best moral and intellectual society, and enjoy happiness himself, and contribute to the happiness of others. Hence, if we have classes in society who are unworthy moral and intellectual beings, it does not result from the institutions of nature, but from the institutions of man, and these institutions are modeled according to the prevailing customs, and not according to the dictates of independent and enlightened rationality.

But from what particular error in the constitution of society does this moral and intellectual depravity, in the lower orders of mankind, result? Perhaps classes in society are unavoidable, as men are variously endowed by nature, but as all men are endowed with the same mental and moral faculties, but in different degrees of strength, and as these

may be farther strengthened by proper cultivation, it follows that all men may become moral and intellectual beings, but not equally so. Hence, classes in society should be based upon moral and intellectual capacity. This is the social institution pointed out by nature. But how is it in the existing state of society? Why, some of the most moral men are classed in the lower orders of society, while many of the most immoral persons flourish in the very highest circles of fashion, and many a splendid mind is obscured by its unfavorable position in society, while many a popinjay, who never had a thought of his own in his life, and has just sense enough to pride himself in his fashionable servitude, figures extensively in the "best society." It is the length of his purse, and not his moral and intellectual capacity, which assigns to man his position in society at the present day.

Such social customs, so directly in violation of the requirements of nature, unavoidably involves society in the most ruinous consequences. Their effects extend to every class of society, to the higher not less than the lower order, and, consequently, vice and misery pervades the entire social system. But let us look at the practical effects as they are manifested before us. It has been shown in a former essay that only one-fourth of the time and effort of man are required to administer to all his natural, physical wants. How conclusively this demonstrates that it is the design of God that the moral and intellectual sentiments of man should exercise a supremacy over his physical and animal nature, and that the greater portion of his time and effort are required to properly cultivate and develop his moral and intellectual nature. Hence if it be true that the proper gratifi-

cation of man's physical nature requires but one-fourth of his time with well directed effort, it follows that, in properly constituted society, three-fourths of his time and effort should be devoted to the proper cultivation of his moral and intellectual nature. Now compare this with the existing constitution of society. The lower orders of society are required to produce all the necessaries of life, which occupies almost the whole of their time, and, consequently, their moral and intellectual natures are almost entirely neglected, while the higher orders are thus in a great measure relieved of the necessity of virtuous effort, and are impelled by the energies of their nature into the practice of vice. Thus are the beneficent designs of God frustrated by human conduct, and vice, in some of its shapes, creeps into almost all human affairs, and misery and suffering, the penalties of violated nature, abound among men. Properly constituted society requires that each of its members should discharge his honest portion of the essential duties of life, affording virtuous gratification to all the functions of mind and body, and cultivating his moral and intellectual nature as the capital means of attaining true happiness. Then would society be founded upon the basis of nature, and all its members would be moral and intellectual beings.

Some of the greatest evils which vicious fashion inflicts upon the human race result from the want of virtuous action in fashionable circles. Useful occupation is the primary source of virtuous action. But the most useful occupations of life are those which fashion proscribes as most degrading to man; and hence, as he can not become respectable by means of humble usefulness, there is a continual effort

in society to escape these degrading occupations, and to become fashionable, that is, to live without virtuous and useful effort.

Man can not attain his proper state of physical, moral, and intellectual maturity and development, except by means of the useful occupations of life. The opinion seems to prevail among men, that life is a continual struggle of exhausting toil and care, that God has so created man, and placed him in the midst of such surrounding circumstances, that all the pleasures which he enjoys are only the considerations of the toil and pain which he suffers, and that he is driven to the performance of the unpleasant duties of life by the lash of his unavoidable necessities. It is true that man has, in every age of the world, and does at the present day, drag through life by a toilsome path of drudgery and suffering; but that path is not the one which is pointed out to him by the God of nature, but the one unto which he has been guided by his own follies and errors. It is too true that man to-day enjoys but very few of the natural pleasures and gratifications of virtuous life, and that he endures suffering and misery in many forms and shapes; but who will have the hardihood to charge these evils to the Author of nature? God never was the author of a single pang of human suffering or woe. Beneficence beams forth from all His creations.

Who will say that even His most fearful punishments are not beneficent, for who will deny the beneficence of the punishment of vice. Pure pleasure and enjoyment are the rewards of obedience to the natural laws by which He governs man; inevitable misery and suffering are the penalties of disobedience. These laws are registered in the book of nature, and exemplified by the experience of life, and, by the aid of properly developed reason, man may ascertain

them so far as they are essential to his happiness. Yet, with all these advantages, and with the experience of six thousand years, he remains an incomprehensible enigma to himself, and can not tell why he enjoys so little real pleasure and suffers so much pain.

The most orthodox professors of religion have been unable to reconcile the pure beneficence of God with the existence of so much human suffering and misery. The difficulty arises merely because the works of God are not sufficiently understood. The doctrine amounts to simply this, that God is not purely benevolent, because man disobeys the laws of God. He has instituted natural laws which man, as a rational being, and as a free agent, can obey, and by obedience he may attain happiness and avoid misery. Why, then, if man choose to disobey, should he charge the effects of his own sins upon his Creator? But it will be asked, if God is almighty and purely benevolent, why did He not so create man that he would not be subject to suffering and misery? Now, if we may be allowed to justify the ways of God to man, we will reason in this way:

When God created man He did not intend to create a being equal with himself, but He merely intended to create a subordinate being, and that subjection to laws established by a superior power is the essential principle of all subordination. But if it be admitted that man was intended to be an inferior being, and subject to the laws which were established by his Creator, it must also be admitted that if man was to be left a free agent, it was absolutely necessary to attach penalties to the violation of these laws, for it is perfectly evident that no such being will obey laws which it makes no difference to him whether he obey them or not; and thus man would

not be placed under the government of his Creator, and God would thus defeat his own purposes. But if man is not to be subjected to the laws of a superior power, and is to be exempted from all pain and misery, and all those frailties which constitute an inferior being, he would himself be a God, and therefore the doctrine just amounts to this, that God is not purely benevolent, because He did not create a God instead of a man. The establishment of laws, therefore, for the government of man being absolutely necessary, how manifest is the benevolence of God displayed by the establishment of such a system of natural laws that they all conduce to enjoyment and happiness of man when he yields them obedience, that their establishment was coeval, at least with his own birth, and their operations universal and invariable.

But the human system is so constituted that the action which is required to supply its natural wants is the primary source of true happiness. Man is so created that he is continually subject to wants, and God, in his beneficence, has so constituted the scheme of nature, that it is precisely adapted to this condition of man, and he is therefore endowed with faculties and powers to which the efforts necessary to supply these wants afford a pleasing gratification, and hence the happiness which God designed, and has qualified man to enjoy, consists of a twofold nature: first, the action which is necessary to produce the means which supply his natural wants afford a grateful and healthy exercise to his physical and intellectual endowments; and, secondly, the gratification of his natural wants with the means thus produced affords him real pleasure and enjoyment, and produces no suffering or misery, and therefore, did man follow the path which God in his works has

pointed out to him, it would not be as it now is; that while exhausting toil and excessive labor, by defeating the scheme of nature, destroys the happiness of a large portion of mankind, and the want of virtuous effort and the excessive gratification of artificial wants destroy the happiness of the balance. Hence this course of conduct has the effect of a twofold curse upon man. These acquired wants being insatiable, their demands require a greater amount of physical effort upon the part of those who produce the means of their gratification than is in accordance with the established scheme of nature, and is accordingly punished as a violation of nature, while in the other division of society, the want of proper physical exertion, and the indulgence of acquired wants, are necessarily vicious, and are also punished as violations of nature. Hence the almost universal unhappiness of man.

Accordingly, we may establish as the true test of virtue, the principle that any action which affords proper gratification to any natural human endowment, physical, moral, or intellectual, is virtuous, and every action which does not afford such gratification is vicious. Applying this test to the practical affairs of life, we safely arrive at the conclusion that the useful occupations of life are the primary sources of virtue, for they alone can afford the proper exercise to the natural faculties of man, and supply his natural wants. But fashion pronounces the most essential of these occupations to be degrading to man, while many of those which it considers as the most respectable employments, do not afford virtuous gratification to any of his natural faculties, or supply any of his natural wants, and are therefore vicious; consequently, according to the prevailing principles of fashion, man is degraded by

virtue, and rendered respectable by vice. Now, placing ourselves upon the fundamental principle of human nature, that all the physical, moral, and intellectual endowments of man can only be strengthened and properly developed by virtuous exercise, and as the useful occupations of life are the only legitimate sources of virtuous exercise, we are necessarily conducted to the conclusion that man can not attain his proper state of physical, moral, and intellectual maturity and development except by means of the useful occupations of life. Of course, the useful occupations or employments of life comprise those which supply his moral and intellectual wants, as well as those which supply his physical wants.

Whence sprung this ruling tyrant, who so arbitrarily and capriciously governs human conduct, and who dares to set up its own image, and bid man to worship it? Who invested him with his power, or whence does he derive his absolute authority? Has God invested him with this crushing power over human conduct? No. God has armed man with the weapons of reason to enable him to defend himself against the effects of such truckling vassalage, but he has failed to avail himself of the means of defense, and the advancing conqueror has securely fastened his fetters upon the world of humanity, and man has become the willing, but abject slave of fashion. Endowed with all the faculties of independent rationality, which, if properly exerted, would lead him to truth and virtue, his highest ambition is to be a loyal subject to his ruling despot, and to do as other people do. Now, as other people have fallen very much in the habit of doing wrong and practicing vice and error, it follows, that if he is faithful

to his allegiance, his duty will lead him into the practice of vice and error. Thus the practice of vice and error is perpetuated from generation to generation; and as each predecessor trod the paths of suffering and misery, so does each successor; and thus man moves on from age to age, without making any efficient effort to free himself from this degrading bondage.

But in what part of his universal empire does this despot hold his seat of government? From whence does he send forth his arbitrary mandates to his loyal subjects? Do mankind know the whereabouts or the wherefore of the authority which they so willingly obey? Why, some foreign empress has bundled herself up in some fantastical shape, and of course all the fashionable world must bundle themselves up in the same fantastical shape. If she expands herself into an eighteen feet circumference, of course independent republican ladies would not be respectable unless they also measure eighteen feet around the skirts; or some foreign courtly nabob dons his wearing apparel in some particular shape, and, consequently, all the chivalrous young men who greatly boast of their independence, must don theirs in the same particular shape; and these same young men would become furiously indignant were they charged with being mere aping animals. Or, some person who is looked upon as a leader among men, acts or thinks in a certain manner, and the whole aping world reasons thus: Well, if it is proper for him to act and think so, it is certainly so for me also; when, in fact, actions and thoughts are not in any case right merely because they are those of certain persons; and thus people are led into slavish error without making any independent effort to prevent it.

Now this is certain, that the farther man follows

this ignus-fatuus the farther it leads him into the swamp; and, just in proportion as he yields to its rule, he is neither an independent nor a rational being. And this capricious, fleeting, fantastical creature of human folly holds a despotic reign over human reason, and its authority prevails among men against the authority of independent rationality. How, then, can it be wondered that man is misled, that the sources of his pleasures and his happiness are perverted into the sources of his suffering and misery; that his groans mingle with the sounds of his revelry, and that his glittering, gaudy superficialities only conceal an aching heart and a sickened soul? At the bidding of fashion, with all his boasted learning, religion, and civilization, he spurns honest effort, the divinely-appointed source of virtue and happiness; and thus obstinately refusing to follow the path which leads to happiness, because he is unhappy he charges his Creator with malevolence of design. He resorts to all manner of dishonest artifices in order to cheat his Creator and his fellow-man out of the virtuous duties which he honestly owes, and to try to "sponge" out his existence upon the means which have been produced by the honest efforts of others; and for this baseness he is honored before the world.

The impression which honest labor makes upon the hands and countenance is the seal of virtue, and yet there is nothing more disrespectable in the sight of fashion than the impression which is thus made. People shudder at the very thought of carrying upon their persons the indelible impression which proves so conclusively that they have been compelled to degrade themselves by performing useful and virtuous physical labor. They feel humbled and degraded when they behold the hand which has been hardened,

the body which has been invigorated, and the countenance which has lost its sickly delicacy, in the service of virtue by honest effort. Why is this so? Does it really disfigure the person of man to discharge those duties which are essential to his existence? Has God given man a symmetrical form and then cruelly required of him duties which destroys its beautiful proportions? Not so. What then? Why, it is not fashionable. Ah, there is the "rub." Little delicate white hands, and a carefully bleached countenance, which show that their owner has never degraded himself or herself by the discharge of the virtuous duties of life, these are the unmistakable indications that such person belongs to the "best society," and is, therefore, thoroughly fashionable, worthless and respectable. How cruel then is the fate of those whose stern necessities drive them to the discharge of honest duty, for they are thereby not only degraded in the fashionable world, but the virtuous effort sets its seal upon their persons, and thus, all the world may know that they are not good society. No votary of fashion must be disgraced by honest labor, and if he engage in virtuous effort, it will set its seal upon his face and hands, and thus it may easily be seen that he has been degrading himself by performing his duty, and, consequently, he must be kicked out of our "best society," for such things are unpardonable there.

If the face and hands be kept delicate and white, it matters but little about the color of the heart. Thus those whose hearts are stained by the influences of vice, and who are devoid of the essential requisites of true respectability, may constitute the best society among men; but be assured that those of humble virtue and honesty, whose persons bear upon them the impression of virtue's seal, but who are ex-

cluded from the higher circles of society upon earth, will constitute the best society in that state of existence where the practice of human folly and vice is not the means of becoming respectable. "The first shall be last, and the last shall be first." That which is evidence of a gentleman among men, will be evidence of a sinner among angels.

Yet, how fearful are the votaries of fashion that they shall bear upon their persons the slightest mark of honest effort. The young lady is more fearful of a stain upon her hand than a blotch upon her soul. She can not bear the thought of appearing in society with the slightest indication upon her delicate fingers, that she has been honestly and virtuously engaged in the discharge of those duties which God requires of her, and the happiness of mankind demands, while she displays, with conscious pride, amid the false glitter of fashionable society, her delicate white hands, which are of themselves conclusive evidence that she is neglecting the most essential duties of life, cheating herself and mankind out of the enjoyment of true happiness, and most wickedly sinning against her Creator.

We have farmers' daughters engaged in the cultivation of white fingers, while their mothers are overtasking themselves in the discharge of domestic duties, and we have merchants' and mechanics' wives and daughters engaged in tattling and gossiping and manufacturing extensive skirts and hoops, while their husbands and fathers, are spending laborious days, and sleepless nights, in order to get a sufficient amount of the omnipotent dollars, to support them in their fashionable extravagance. How can man be happy while he is laboring under the perversion or neglect of all the means which can render him happy? Can he become happy by defeating the designs of

God, and perverting all his proffered blessings? Let the groans and misery of mankind answer. Shame, that such a state of society should exist, that the unmistakable evidences of genuine worth and usefulness, of true virtue and morality, of the faithful discharge of the essential duties of life, should be considered as a disgrace to those who possess them, while those who bear upon their person conclusive evidence of their utter worthlessness and sinful idleness, are the only persons who are considered worthy of the respect and estimation of persons of boasted gentility.

Hide your delicate white fingers, you guilty things, and blush for shame. Cease to display the evidence of your own worthlessness with an air of triumph, before men of sense. Stand aside, ye false creations of human folly, and make room for nature's noblemen; for true ladies and gentlemen, who bear upon their person the indelible impression of virtue's seal, who are rejoicing in mental vigor and physical strength and health, and although they may not be respectable in the sight of vicious fashion, yet they are so in the sight of God and truth. But let us wait and work. When society shall be constructed upon the basis of true virtue and morality, when it shall no longer be considered degrading to man to obey the will of his Creator, then will the worthless gew-gaws of fashion sink in the depths of their real contemptibleness, and the honest efforts of mankind be diverted from sustaining them in their wasteful worthlessness, and be directed, not to the accumulation of unnecessary wealth, but to the pursuit and enjoyment of true happiness. Then man, imitating the virtuous bee, shall expel the useless drones from the human hive. It is a discouraging fact, which conclusively demonstrates the falseness of the present constitution of society, that the more

refined and civilized it becomes, the more disgraceful is honest labor considered to be to man, and the more respectable he becomes by extravagant indolence and worthlessness. If human civilization can not be carried forward without carrying with it such a deadly blight to human virtue and happiness, may God, in his infinite mercy, check its further progress.

The mode of dress which fashion prescribes is very frequently such that it is destructive of health and comfort. This is particularly the case with ladies. If fashion bid them dress so thinly that it does not protect them from the effects of the weather, they will endure present suffering, risk future health, and even dare the terrors of death rather than disobey the arbitrary tyrant. For instance, on the occasion of an evening party, delicate females, entirely uninured to exposure, will throw off their warmer clothing and dress themselves with light, insufficient garments, and going from heated rooms into a freezing atmosphere, they very frequently thus plant the seeds of disease in the system, which sooner or later ripen into suffering and death. If fashion prescribes that the arms shall be left naked so it must be, although the arms, being extremities, are the more liable to the effects of the atmosphere; if fashion says the proper way to dress the neck and shoulders, is not to dress them at all, of course they must be left entirely exposed, although the throat and lungs, which are thus left unprotected, are more liable to dangerous disease than any other part of the human system; if fashion requires that ladies shall wear shoes which are scarcely more protection than so much brown paper, of course every fashionable and respectable lady must wear them, although the feet require to be most carefully

protected against the effects of dampness and cold, and their exposure is a most prolific source of suffering and death.

Now, in regard to true modesty, what more impropriety is there in a gentleman appearing half naked than a lady. Yet a lady may appear in society with her neck, shoulders, and arms entirely exposed, and she will be admired as most elegantly and appropriately dressed; but if a gentleman appear in company in his shirt sleeves, without any part exposed except his face and hands, he will be denounced as a most ill-behaved, low-bred wretch. Now, these proprieties are established merely by fashion, and are not founded upon any principle of true morality or etiquette, for certainly if there is any impropriety in either sex appearing thus naked in company, it is woman.

Alas! is woman such a cringing slave to this despot that she must obey all his demands, even at the sacrifice of her health and life? What irresistible power binds her to her fatal servitude? Is she not endowed with sufficient rationality and moral courage to enable her to disenthral herself? Can she not dress herself with taste and elegance, and in such a manner as to preserve her health?

Modern fashion has established the custom of compressing most that part of the body which nature requires should be left most free and untrammeled. That part of the body which contains the lungs, the heart, and all the vital energies of life, is frequently so tightly dressed as to disturb their free operation, and disease, in some of its most fearful forms, is almost sure to follow. Perhaps the corset, the means by which ladies have so long been committing unintentional suicide, is not so much used now as formerly, but still the breast and waist are too much

compressed, and ladies still pride themselves upon their slender waists, which can only be regarded with a shudder by those who understand the human organism. The effects of this mode of dressing may not be immediately manifested, and they are scarcely ever traced to their true cause, but the most vital laws of human nature are thus grossly violated, and the consequent penalties are inevitable. The violation of these laws is punished in various ways. Perhaps the disease assumes some malignant form, and death soon takes place; but more frequently such dressing prevents the full development of the physical organism, and the offender becomes delicate, and liable to disease, and frequently goes into a languishing decline, until death mercifully ends the scene of anguish and suffering.

What can thus urge woman on in her reckless course of self-murder? Surely unfettered reason should teach her the absurd criminality of sacrificing health and life, with all their endearments, to such delusive phantasms as the follies of fashion. And yet it can not result from her instinct; for if you were thus to compress the vital parts of an instinctive brute, and encumber it with supernumerary skirts, hoops, and flounces, it would tear them off with disgust, and let the laws of its nature operate freely. No: mere instinct can never accomplish such guilt; it requires the higher powers of perverted rationality. To this cause, together with the want of proper exercise, must be attributed, in a great measure, the present physically-degenerated condition of fashionable ladies.

If we compare the present state of the human race with the condition of its primitive generations, before human folly and vice had made such havoc upon human happiness, it will cause every lover of

his race to blush with shame and sorrow. Let us look for reliable authority upon this subject.

"I hold," says Horace Mann, "it to be morally impossible for God to have created, in the beginning, such men and women as we find the human race, in their physical condition, now to be. Examine the book of Genesis, which contains the earliest annals of the human family. As is commonly supposed, it comprises the first twenty-three hundred and sixty-nine years of human history. With childlike simplicity, this book describes the infancy of mankind. Unlike modern histories, it details the minutest circumstances of social and individual life. Indeed, it is rather a series of biographies than a history. The false delicacy of modern times did not forbid the mention of whatever was done or suffered, and yet over all that expanse of time—for more than one-third part of the duration of the human race—not a single instance is recorded of a child born blind, or deaf, or dumb, or idiotic, or malformed in any way! During the whole period not a single case of a natural death in infancy, or childhood, or early manhood, or even of middle manhood, is found. Not one man or woman died of disease. The simple record is, 'and he died,' or he died 'in good old age, and full of years,' or, he was 'old and full of days.' No epidemic, nor even epidemic disease prevailed, showing that they died the natural death of healthy men, and not the unnatural death of distempered ones. Through all this time (except in the single case of Jacob, in his old age, and then only for a day or two before his death) it does not appear that any man was ill, or that any old lady, or young lady, ever fainted. Bodily pain from disease is no where mentioned. No cholera infantum, scarlatina, measels, small-pox, not even a toothache.

So extraordinary a thing was it for a son to die before his father, that an instance of it is deemed worthy of special notice; and this first case of the reversal of nature's law was two thousand years after the creation of Adam. See how this reversal of nature's law has, for us, become the law; for how rare is it now for all the children of a family to survive the parents? Rachel died at the birth of Benjamin; but this is the only case of puerperal death mentioned in the first twenty-four hundred years of sacred history, and even this happened during the fatigues of a patriarchal journey, when passengers were not wafted along in the saloons of railcar or steamboat."

Let us now present a few facts and reflections founded upon the Massachusetts Registration Report for 1855. After noticing that the deaths which result from other diseases are very nearly equally divided between the sexes, it is said: "Referring now to consumption, we might expect to find a similar state of things; but no, it is strangely and sadly different. Excluding the deaths below 10 and over 60, for reasons suggested in the report, viz., that wasting and decay, arising from old age or constitutional weakness, were often erroneously returned under the head of consumption; and excluding also the deaths between 40 and 60, when there is nearly an equality, and when any special causes would probably have already produced their effects, we obtain this remarkable result: Total deaths from consumption between the ages of 10 and 40, 2,590; of these but 966, or 37 per cent., are of men; while 1,624, or nearly 63 per cent., are of women. Between 10 and 30 the difference is still greater. During this period the deaths of females are 1,123 out of 1,735, *i. e.*, nearly 65

per cent.; 10 to 20 is still worse—very nearly 67 per cent.

"So that we shall not be far from the truth in saying, that of the deaths from consumption between the ages of 10 and 25, those of females are to those of males as 2 to 1.

"Here evidently is indicated, in language too plain to be misunderstood, the existence of some special cause producing consumption among females out of all reasonable proportion, and which does not act in the case of fevers and of many other diseases. It may be said that woman's more delicate organization renders her more susceptible to the attacks of disease; but if her organization is sensitive and delicate, it is also endowed with great powers of endurance. Besides, the same thing might be said in regard to typhus fever; but statistics disprove the hypothesis; and, moreover, men, from their occupations, are much more exposed to the danger of consumption than women are, at least by any necessity. But it is illogical to seek in the dark distance for causes, when all-sufficient ones lie open before our eyes. Look at the dress of woman."

Yes, look at the dress of woman. Wearing her dress for the purpose of fashionable display, instead of so adapting it as to secure her health and comfort; exposing most those parts of the body which require most protection, dressing tightest those parts which it is most dangerous to compress, wearing shoes that the stoutest man would catch cold through in walking one square; and, thus dressed, she frequently passes from a heated room into a freezing atmosphere. No wonder the figures give us such startling facts. But let us look again at the statistics. Between the ages of 40 and 60, and also above

60, when ladies are not so fashionable in their mode of dress, the deaths are nearly equally divided between the sexes; but between the ages of 10 and 25, when ladies are most subjected to the deadly consequences of fashionable dressing, the deaths of females are to those of males as 2 to 1. Why need we seek farther to learn why it is that our American women are so frail and delicate, and die so early? Fashion forbids them to take that virtuous exercise which alone can give them a healthy and vigorous physical development, and bids them dress in a manner which must inevitably, sooner or later, induce disease and suffering. How cruel is their fate! Enslaved by a tyrant who demands their health and life as the consequence of their servitude, yet they yield him a willing and scrupulous obedience. When will she have the moral courage to defy the power of this tyrant, and, by obeying the will of her Creator, become a woman, healthy, vigorous and beautiful, instead of the frail, consumptive, suffering, useless, and extravagant slave of fashion that she now is? The small waist is the beauty of a wasp, and not of a woman.

But why this great change in the physical condition of man since the Old Testament ages? Is the work of God so imperfect that man, as he labors under the accumulation of ages, is necessarily deprived of the health and vigor which were enjoyed by the progenitors of his race? No. The languishing and indolent votary of fashion, as he reclines in feebleness and physical degeneracy in the halls of luxury and wealth, the delicate belle, who has barely strength enough to read the last novel, or to dance all night, but not half enough to lift a smoothing iron, and all the respectable portion of community who

belong to our best society, who spend much and earn nothing, who have the good taste and independence to wear their clothes as the folks do in Paris, and who, as a general thing, have about as much strength as so many well-fed cats; all this worthless human luggage, which so overloads and impedes the advancement of true happiness, but for human follies and vices, might have been this day as vigorous, healthy, and happy as the patriarchs of old.

The human race has, doubtless, made much progress; we possess many facilities for the attainment of happiness and the enjoyment of life which were unknown to our forefathers; but it really seems that our physical degeneracy has just about kept pace with our material progress. Excessive refinement invariably destroys the essential requisites of true happiness. The spirit of the age is that of fashionable refinement, and we have refined and accomplished ourselves until among the professionally refined and accomplished, all the noblest virtues are refined away, and the person of refinement and accomplishment is too frequently nothing but a strutting fop, so utterly worthless, that could he not depend upon others more virtuous than himself for the means of subsistence, he would certainly starve to death. The proper refinement of manners is certainly a virtue, but the excess of every virtue is vice. If refinement is to be purchased at the expense of the noblest attributes of our nature, and by the sacrifice of the means of attaining true happiness; if, in order to become refined and accomplished, it is necessary to incur disease and suffering in their most hideous shapes, we oppose them as the worst enemies of the human race. If we can not have the virtuous refinement of real worth and usefulness, let us have none at all. Give us the

uncouth but virtuous and useful member of society, rather than the refined and accomplished but worthless and vicious idler.

It has already been shown that the disease and misery which man suffers, are entirely in consequence of his own vices and follies, and these vices and follies consist in the absurd violation of the laws which his Creator has established for his government. It has also been shown that the physical degeneracy of woman was attributable almost entirely to the want of proper physical exercise, which fashion prevents, and to the effects of improper dressing, which fashion demands. It will now be shown that these evils can not be confined to the female sex, but that their effects are extended to both sexes. But it is not pretended that the physical degeneracy of man is entirely attributable to the fashionable follies and vices of woman, for he is guilty of many gross vices and follies which prey upon physical health and vigor; but which are not endorsed by fashion, and, therefore, can not be considered in this essay. But woman, at least the respectable portion of the female sex, is not submitted to the temptation of these grosser vices. When once she yields to these, she is generally lost for ever, and hence it is one of the most beneficent arrangements of society that she is almost entirely removed from their influence. But for this very reason she submits herself more unreservedly to the fashionable follies and vices, or those in which society permits her to indulge, and hence they have shed their most baleful influence upon her, and this accounts for the obvious fact, that the women of the present day have reached a lower state of comparative physical degeneracy than the men.

Now, placing ourselves upon the established principle of the hereditary transmission of qualities, from

the parent to the child, it will be readily perceived that the physical enervation of the parent is transmitted to the child, and thus the evils of fashion which directly affect woman, are indirectly transmitted to the male as well as the female portion of the community. Thus children are born with enfeebled constitutions, which, instead of possessing the glow and vigor of a healthy organism, contain the seeds of incipient disease, which being fostered by further fashionable vices, too frequently ripen into premature suffering and death. It is an established law of nature that parents of feeble constitution give birth to unhealthy offspring, and then their untimely suffering is charged to the unscrutable providence of God, when it results entirely from the sin of the parents, and the children are thus suffering the penaltics of natural laws which their parents have violated, God thus visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him. What an impressive lesson it should be to the fashionable mother, as, with a heart bursting with grief, she leans over the deathbed of her suffering child, as in mortal agonies it groans and writhes in the clutches of death, and even yet, while the bloom of youth is upon its lovely form, it sinks to its untimely grave; and, perhaps, all this has resulted from an enfeebled constitution inherited from her, in consequence of fashionable follies and vices.

In society, as it is at present constituted, woman is placed in a state of dependence which fetters many of her noblest attributes, and thus prevents her from attaining her proper sphere of action, and by this means many of her best qualities for usefulness are rendered ineffectual, and she is thus prevented from contributing her proper share to the

common stock of human happiness. It has been previously shown that she is inferior to man in those qualities of mind and body which relate to the successful discharge of the sterner duties of life, but yet she possesses many natural qualities in a much stronger degree than him, and for this very reason nature and human happiness require that these predominant qualities should be allowed to operate in an entirely unfettered and independent manner. But so long as woman is in such a great measure dependent upon man for all the comforts and necessaries of life, the strong tendency is either to reduce her to a useless toy, as is the case in fashionable life, or to render her a mere drudge, as is too frequently the case in life's humbler walks, either of which removes her from her proper sphere of action, and defeats the scheme of human happiness.

It is not the right of woman to exercise political franchises, because she is not qualified for it by nature; neither is it her right or duty to enter upon the more rugged occupations of life; but it is her right that the faithful discharge of her legitimate duties should at all times secure complete independence, subject only to the legal consequences of her own acts. Hence, any state of society in which the honest efforts of woman do not secure for her remuneration in exact proportion to the real value of the services rendered, is false to nature and to justice. Man has no just right to obtain more for his labor than woman does for hers, when the real service performed is of equal intrinsic value to mankind.

The employments of woman and the profits of her labor are confined by custom, and not by nature. Although nature has not devolved the same duties upon man and woman, yet her duties are sufficiently extended if she would only faithfully discharge those

for which she is qualified by nature, yet some of the dreaming reformers of the age are demanding additional rights for her, for which she is not qualified by nature, while she is neglecting those which come within her legitimate sphere. It is the right and duty of woman to do whatever she is qualified by her natural endowments to do, and not to ask whether this or that virtuous occupation is indorsed by custom, or respectable in the sight of man; if she has natural capacities for its successful practice she may be sure that her efforts will be respectable in the sight of God. Surely, were she to act upon these principles of fundamental virtue, her sphere of action would be sufficiently enlarged, and her labor would be sufficiently remunerative to secure her independence.

But the present system of education contributes, in a powerful manner, to fix the fetters of dependence upon woman. As the duties which she is required to discharge through life are radically different from those which are devolved upon man, so is the system of education, which will best qualify her for the successful discharge of those duties, radically different from that system which furnishes to man the most reliable assistance in the discharge of his duties. While man and woman are so fundamentally different in their natures, and the peculiar duties which are required of each are so different, how can it be expected that the same system of instruction can be equally well adapted to both? True, the course of study is slightly varied, but this variation generally consists in some superficial accomplishment, which answers no other purpose than that of making her a useless ornament, instead of a true woman. It is well enough to devote a portion of female study to superficial accomplishments, but, whenever this is made

the chief object of female education, the rock is undermined upon which the very nature of true womanhood is founded. An other defect in the system is, that the young ladies who are said to have received a good education, are educated as though they were intended for professors of the dead languages, or the abstract sciences, instead of wives and mothers. Again, we say that it is well enough to devote a portion of female study to these sciences, but it will not do to make them the chief object of female education.

Woman should be well educated, but can she be said to be well educated when the course of instruction which she receives only disqualifies her for the discharge of her duties? The chief object of female education should be to teach her a correct knowledge of herself, and of the peculiar duties which she alone can perform, and of the conditions of her own happiness and existence. What does the young lady, when she receives her diploma at the fashionable boarding-school know of herself, or of those essential duties which the scheme of nature inexorably demands at her hands? What does she know of those laws of nature by which she will be required to shape the mental, moral and physical destinies of the next succeeding generation of man? Absolutely nothing. To place a young lady at one of our fashionable female seminaries is a most unfortunate way to form a true woman. True, she may become scientific and accomplished, as a scholar, but the tendency is to render her worthless as a woman. The teachers fail to impress upon their students that the proper sphere of woman's action is not in the domain of cold, abstract science and learning, but in the kingdom of warm love and affection, and in the faithful discharge of those duties which God

has devolved upon her, and which she alone can perform.

Consequently the idea becomes fixed in the mind, that an empty smattering of learning, and a full stock of vain and non-essential accomplishments are indispensable to those who are to figure in the higher circles of society, while they also receive and act upon the impression that the faithful discharge of life's most essential duties is degrading to a lady of refinement and education. Thus it is that those useless female votaries of fashion are formed, who have no firmer basis upon which to found their spurious claims to superior dignity and respectability than their own follies and vices, and who act no nobler part in the grand moving scheme of nature than that of attempting to kill time which drags so heavily upon their hands, for the want of useful occupation, by engaging in novel reading, extravagant dressing, useless needle-work, and fashionable gossip-talking. If woman can not be educated and yet retain all those sterling qualities with which her Creator has endowed her, and remain true to nature, by the faithful discharge of the duties which human happiness requires of her, let female education be swept away a withering curse. But nothing is more essential to human happiness than a proper system of female education. She can never otherwise attain her true state of being, nor exert over man the reclaiming and ennobling influence of her true nature. The cause of humanity never can otherwise be permanently advanced, nor man rescued from the deluge of disease, suffering, and misery which is now flooding the world. When shall it be? When society, and woman especially, shall be freed from the fetters of false customs, and

shall earnestly seek to know herself, her duties, and to do them.

After what has been advanced in the preceding pages, it is certainly useless to enter into an argument to demonstrate the utter incompatibility of modern fashion and true religion. They are antagonistic in every particular. Hence, it is impossible that the spirit of both can exist in the mind at the same time. Just in the proportion that the one takes possession of the mind, the other is expelled from it. Yet it is an undeniable fact that those persons who make the highest pretensions and loudest professions of religion, are generally the very ones who carry the fashionable follies and vices of the day to the greatest excess. Notwithstanding, the christian religion is preëminent above all others, for the plainness and simplicity which it enjoins upon its professors, yet many of them seem to think they are not prepared to attend the public worship of their meek and lowly Savior, unless they are arrayed in all glittering flippery, and gaudy folly of modern fashion. They can not discover any inconsistency in professing the doctrines of the New Testament, and acting directly contrary to those doctrines. Christian; pause and examine the old landmarks of your religion, and see if you are not, in this particular, departing very far from the straight and narrow way. We shall urge no farther. May the day soon come when man shall be disenthralled from the fetters of fashionable servitude, and act under the guidance of his own properly-developed and unperverted rationality.

ESSAY V.

RELIGIOUS FANCIES AND FOLLIES.

THE natural endowments of man constitute him a religious being. The Creator has implanted the sentiment of veneration in the mind of man, and it is as unquestionably an inherent quality of human nature as any other faculty of the mind. It is the cardinal distinctive faculty which elevates man above the brute creation, and points him beyond the scenes of sublunary darkness for the consummation of the most perfect sphere of happiness, and but for this sentiment his progressive amelioration would be utterly impracticable, and he would become a groveling animal, whose higher endowments would only more forcibly urge him to seek the debasing gratification of his sensual propensities. Deprived of this sentiment, what principle of his nature, what combination of faculties could direct his aim to a higher destiny. Unaided by this divine sentiment, cold and selfish reason, by its most giant strides, could arrive at no conclusion, or establish no principle, which could direct its aim to a glorious immortality; but man, floundering helplessly upon the dark ocean of incomprehensible principles, without a compass to guide him upon his way, would inevitably become stranded, and his happiness, as a moral being, totally destroyed by the desolating waves of unmitigated skepticism.

As the powerful steam-engine, when properly con-

trolled by man, becomes a submissive instrument which promotes his welfare and enjoyment, but if its mighty energies are loosened from his control, its great power only renders his suffering and destruction more speedy and inevitable, thus verifying the universal fact, that the more power a principle possesses for the accomplishment of good when properly directed, it also possesses the more power for the accomplishment of evil when perverted or misdirected. So the power of reason, when directed and controlled by the principle of veneration, which is the germ of religious sentiment, becomes the means by which man attains the highest state of virtue and happiness; but when it ceases to be guided by unperverted veneration, its powerful energies only the more speedily undermine the foundations of morality and religion, and produce the greatest evils which humanity can endure. Reason, deprived of veneration, could have no power of comprehending the idea of an overruling Providence, and, therefore, the idea of a Supreme Being would be discarded from the thoughts of man, and he would thus lose the reclaiming and elevating influences of religious faith, and the universal creed of man must become that of atheism.

But the past and present history of man justifies the assertion, that such can never be the condition of the human race, and hence it results, that there is an inborn sentiment implanted in the mind of man, which causes him to believe that there is an overruling power which dispenses and controls human affairs. That this belief is innate in the human mind, and not the result of reason and reflection, is proved by the fact that we find it existing among tribes of men who are totally incapable of serious reflection, and are scarcely more controlled by the dictates of

reason than are the tribes of the brute creation. The universal man is endowed with the same faculties and powers of mind and body, in every condition of human existence; but these faculties and powers exist in different degrees of strength, in different nations of people, and in different individuals of the same nation. The ignorant savage and the enlightened statesman, are each endowed with the same faculties and sentiments, but they exist in different degrees of strength and development. No tribe of the human race is so degraded, or the higher faculties so obliterated by excessive indulgence in sensual gratifications, that all the faculties and sentiments of human nature are not yet existing in the mind, and may be brought into action by the proper course of cultivation. It will require more than one generation to transform a tribe of savages into an enlightened nation, but this transformation may be effected without the aid of any other agency than the proper cultivation of the inherent faculties of the human mind. Hence the only reason why one portion of mankind is civilized, and an other portion savage is, because, in the civilized portion, the higher faculties of the human mind are more or less cultivated, according to the state of civilization, while in the savage portion, those faculties are allowed to lie dormant, and the lower propensities of man are brought into active exercise, and, consequently, control his conduct.

Now, as the sentiment of veneration is an inherent faculty of the human mind, and as all men are endowed with the same mental faculties only differing in degree of strength and activity, and as the legitimate result of this faculty is the belief in, and adoration of an overruling power, which controls the affairs of man, it follows, that he is naturally a religious being. But, according to the above principles,

this faculty may become so obscured by irreligious practices, that it will lie entirely inactive and dormant in the mind, but can not be entirely eradicated from it, and hence the fact, frequently noticed by travelers and historians, that there are tribes of men among whom can not be detected the slightest indications of religious sentiments. Therefore this fact is perfectly reconcilable with the proposition that religion is a natural sentiment, implanted in the human mind by the hand of God, and therefore pervades universal humanity. And hence, the assertion of certain christian authors is not true, that all the religious sentiments of mankind, in whatever shape they have manifested themselves, were derived either directly or indirectly, from the revelations of the Bible. The various religions which have existed in the world, were not derived, even remotely, from the word of God as revealed in the Bible, but they have resulted from the work of God as displayed in the constitution of human nature.

Veneration is the controlling faculty of man's moral sentiments, and as the condition of humanity can not be ameliorated except by the proper development of the moral sentiments, it follows that it is of the utmost importance to mankind, that this faculty should be cultivated and developed by the exercise of the purest sentiments of religion. It is the balance-wheel of the properly developed mind, which not only regulates the motion of the human machine in this world, but according to all the multiform systems of theology, it is the only guide which can safely conduct us into the realms of happiness in a future world. Hence it is obvious that there is no influence brought to bear upon human conduct which so effectually shapes the destinies of man in time and in eternity, as the influence of his religious sen-

timents. But although religion is of such vital importance to man, and veneration, when properly directed, conduces more than any other sentiment to his moral health and happiness, yet there is no source which has been so prolific of folly, fanaticism and absurdity, which has caused such revolting scenes of cruelty, bloodshed and outrage, as the perversion of this sentiment, thus again demonstrating the fact, that the nobler the attribute of human nature, the greater the evils which result from its perversion. Thus, that sentiment of the human mind, which, when properly developed, causes man to appear almost angelic; transforms him into a very hell-fiend when perverted. When acting under its unperverted guidance, man is kind, humble, moral, and truly religious; when acting under its perversion, no act too cruel, no torture too excruciating, no murder or martyrdom too bloody.

Thus it is that religion itself has so frequently produced the worst evils which it is designed to prevent. It is a very easy transition from the proper use to the abuse of any sentiment of the human mind. And there is a peculiarity attending the perversion of the sentiment of veneration which belongs to no other. It is but a step from religion to fanaticism, and the votary, instead of being conscious that he is running into viciousness, sincerely believes that he is becoming more religious. In most other vices, man, as he passes from virtue into vice, becomes conscious that he is a wrong-doer; he is frequently warned of his danger, and his moral nature lashes him back into the path of his duty, but in religious viciousness, *i. e.* when he gives way to the excessive gratification of his religious sentiments, his whole moral nature is enlisted in their behalf, and the belief becomes immovably fixed in his mind that he is becoming more

perfectly religious at the very time that he is departing farther from true religion, and running into the wildest fanaticism. The fanatic is the most confirmed and devoted of all the professors of religion, and most earnestly endeavors to do that which he conceives to be his duty; but by the perversion of his religious sentiments he acts directly contrary to his own intentions, and makes religion a vice and an evil instead of a virtue.

It will not do to charge the inquisitors of Madrid with insincerity of purpose, for it is very certain that they really thought that they were performing the duties which religion enjoined upon them; but the gross perversion of their religious sentiments led them into the strange and inconsistent error that the religion, which, more than all others, is distinguished for its peace and good will to man, and is so emphatically the religion of love and mercy, could only be propagated by bloodshed and murder. The Roman Catholic of the middle age, evidently, sincerely believed that the extermination of the heretics from the earth by fire and sword, was a duty enjoined upon him by God, and that he would be finally rewarded for shedding the blood of his fellow-beings, because they did not believe as himself. The bloody religious wars and persecutions which have desolated Europe, Asia and Africa for successive ages, and were carried on by the professors of the christian religion, who with their own hands shed the blood of millions of their fellow-christians, without even suspecting that they were departing in the slightest from its precepts; these attest that the most potent agencies for evil lurk beneath the strictest profession of religion, and that the religious sentiment, in whatever shape it may manifest itself, when once perverted, visits upon

the human race the greatest evils which have ever afflicted it.

It may now be perceived that all religion is founded upon the same sentiment of the human mind, and is pure or impure according as that sentiment is properly cultivated or perverted. One portion of the human family are followers of Christ; an other of Mahomet, and an other worships at the shrine of heathenism, from the same principle; and that is the inborn feeling of veneration which is implanted in the human mind. The particular form of religion which a people professes is determined by the manner in which this feeling or sentiment is exercised, and any nation of people, by the proper course of instruction and discipline, may be shaped into christians, Mohammedans, or heathen, and every religion, whether of human or divine origin, no difference how pure and truthful may be its precepts, is liable to perversion, and may result in the grossest errors and superstition. History justifies the assertion that christianity became, during the dark ages, the most superstitious and corrupt religion that ever existed upon the earth; yet christianity, when divested of the errors which human folly and perverseness have engrafted upon it, is the purest religion which has yet been taught to man. This did not result from any imperfect defects in the christian religion, but from the perversion and depravity of the sentiment in the human mind, upon which all religion is founded. This sentiment may become perverted and yet not depraved; for instance, fanaticism perverts it, and generally leads men to the persecution of their fellow men, instead of the worship of their Creator; but immoral and irreligious practices deprave it, and

when this is the case, all the moral sentiments of men generally sink with it.

Now, if we carefully consider these principles, we shall discover that Polytheism became the primitive religion of man, as the legimate result of the laws which control human conduct. Unassisted reason was incapable of arriving at the grand idea of one Supreme overruling providence; the self-existing Author of Creation, who governs all the systems of the Universe by definitely established and uniform laws. The idea is too huge for the narrow conception of the human mind; and had not the Author of nature made himself known by direct revelation, the strong probability is, that man would, to this day, have been ignorant of the most essential attributes of his Creator. It is true that the cosmogony of some ancient system of philosophy has attempted to fix upon some single creative or operative principle which called the universe into existence, but the false conclusions at which they arrived and the absurd ideas which were entertained of the Creator and the created, only more plainly demonstrated the utter incapacity of the unassisted mind to discover the hidden secret of nature. Such efforts, unaided by revelation, generally resulted in gross pantheistic conceptions; the extreme antithesis of the Divine Essence of the self-existent, uncreated God.

Man being thus incapable of comprehending the grand conceptions of Theism, the sentiment of veneration naturally caused him to look up to some higher power as the proper object of its gratification, and thus he necessarily formed such systems of religion as best accorded with his intelligence, and with the circumstances by which he was surrounded. It must be remembered that in these early ages the great

mass of mankind possessed no knowledge of the God of Israel. The operations of nature were incomprehensible to man. They seemed to be controlled by some capricious power or powers, which defied all system. And as he could discover no uniform principle which seemed to control all the affairs of life, but different occupations and enterprises seemed to be controlled by distinct causes or powers, it therefore very naturally appeared to him that there were different powers controlling the different modes of life. For instance, the same person would some times be successful in one department of life, but unsuccessful in an other; he would be successful in all his mercantile affairs, but trouble and sorrow would overtake him in his domestic relations; he would be prosperous upon land, but unfortunate upon sea; hence, he reasonably concluded that there were different overruling powers which controlled these different spheres of action. Hence resulted the cardinal idea of Polytheism; that there was a distinct, invisible, intelligent power which controlled the results of each distinct department of action, and accordingly, we find that Cupid was the god of love; Venus the goddess of beauty; Juno was invoked at marriages, and Lucinia at births. The prayers of seamen were addressed to Neptune, and Mars received those of warriors, while the husbandman cultivated his fields under the protection of Ceres, and the merchant acknowledged the authority of Mercury.

Thus the heathen deities were indefinitely multiplied, and all the operations of nature, and the result of each human transaction, became the subject of peculiar prayers and thanksgivings. But as the sentiment of veneration became depraved, it naturally sought gratification by the adoration of debased objects, and dogs, cats, snakes, crocodiles,

and almost all the different species of reptiles, varmints, and monsters, became the objects of human worship; and so obscured did the light of reason become by the clouds of superstition, that the highest aim of the religious sentiment of human nature was to appease the wrath, and secure the protection of the lifeless objects of inanimate nature, and in this debased condition remains a portion of the human race, even to-day.

According to the constitution of human nature, it is perfectly obvious that, as long as the sentiment of veneration was directed to the worship of such debased objects, religion had no other influence than to deprave the human race. Religion, in order to exert a reclaiming and elevating influence upon the human mind, must direct its worship to a pure and exalted object, and the purer and more exalted the conceptions of religion, the nobler the influences which it exerts upon the mind. Thus did the religion of the Bible come to the rescue of mankind. Although many errors and superstitions have been engrafted upon it by human ignorance and credulity, yet it pointed the veneration of man to the worship of a just and supreme God, pure and exalted beyond the utmost conceptions of the human mind.

A pure and shining ray beams forth from the dawning of the christian era. Aside from the Divine Teacher, the primitive christians were, perhaps, as perfect examples of untarnished piety and virtue as the history of man can furnish. But let us here remark, that nothing can afford more consolation and encouragement to the advocate of human improvement than the pleasing reflection that all the qualities which enabled the primitive christians to attain such a pure and exalted, moral and religious condition, are inherent in human nature, and that this

assertion is not founded upon mere speculative theory, but upon the unquestionable fact that man has already proved his capacity to attain it. This, therefore, exposes the fallacy of the argument, that because the mass of humanity are ignorant and immoral, therefore, the mass of mankind are inherently incapable of attaining and sustaining an elevated state of intelligence and morality; for, as already shown, all these moral faculties are implanted in the mind of universal humanity, and it only requires the fostering hand of proper cultivation to develop them into strength and activity.

How lovely is the light of pure and undefiled christianity, which shines forth amid the deep darkness which had settled around the religious sentiments of mankind in the age of the christian era. The primitive christians deeply impressed with the truth and spirit of christianity, and advocating a new doctrine, which was radically contrary to all the received religious opinions of the age, and conscientiously refusing to observe any of the prevailing religious rites and ordinances, it necessarily produced feelings of bitter animosity between the proselytes to christianity and the votaries of paganism, which lead to determined opposition and persecution. Although the systems of paganism admitted of complete religious tolerance, and even permitted foreign gods to be placed among native deities, and the pagan could see no inconsistency in admitting the truth of all religions, yet when the worshippers of the "unknown God" claimed for him supreme and undivided jurisdiction over the universal creation, it was soon perceived that this new religion aimed at the destruction of all others. Yet the persecutions which ensued scarcely deserve the name when compared with the murderous persecutions, frequently

aiming at total extermination, which different denominations of christians have since inflicted upon each other.

The primitive christians had no motives to induce them to espouse the cause of christianity but the purest motives of religion, and a thorough conviction of its truth. It was not the established religion of any nation; its profession was not fashionable among men, and those who became christians must expect to meet the jeers and persecutions of their fellow-men, and, consequently, we may safely conclude, that when any person made a profession of christianity under such circumstances, he had very thoroughly purged his nature of all its vanities, follies, and vices; and he became a christian in truth and in spirit. For this reason the primitive christians reckoned among their numbers scarcely any persons of influence or wealth, but they were drawn almost entirely from the humbler classes of society. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that christianity has not equalled, in the more advanced ages of its existence, the pure light with which it shone forth in its infancy.

Indeed, an intimate knowledge of human nature, and a careful study of the history of man, establishes the conclusion that the most exalted emotions and ennobling sentiments of the human mind can only be elicited by constant struggle and strong opposition, and that, as soon as complete success has been achieved, prosperity and inaction relaxes and destroys the noble energies of our nature, and the true virtue and greatness of man naturally sink into dilapidation and decay. The history of christianity affords no exception to this general rule. In its earlier ages, earnestly seeking proselytes among antagonistic religions, and sincerely desiring the conversion of mankind to its faith, with nothing to

recommend it to the world but the purity and exaltedness of its doctrines, it necessarily required a constant struggle upon the part of its believers to sustain it against the strong opposition which it encountered; and this struggle, together with an earnest effort to live in accordance with its doctrines, formed in its professors the most perfect models of christian virtue and morality. But as soon as the conversion of the emperor Constantine made it the established religion of the Roman world, and it thus became popular and fashionable, prosperity sapped the fountains of its purity, and its native simplicity was lost amid the pomp and parade of public worship.

It is by no means an anomaly in the history of human affairs that the christian religion was deprived of its purity and simplicity at the commencement of its success. But there were external causes which hastened its degradation. Although it was introduced into the world during the Augustine age, yet, before it became the religion of any considerable part of the human race, the sun of the Augustine civilization was fast approaching its final setting. Christianity spread with the reign of ignorance and superstition. It received the impress of the age, and soon presented a most disgusting spectacle of superstition and absurdity. The fall of the great colossus of Roman power buried beneath its ruins the last spark of civilization that existed among men, and the fetters of an eternal night of mental darkness seemed riveted upon the human mind. No ray of philosophic light beamed forth from Greece, the primitive school-house of human science; the Augustine age had long since passed away, and the glorious fabric of Roman learning had either perished, or existed in old unused volumes, which

had accidentally escaped the mental deluge, to be bequeathed as the rich legacy of ancient to modern civilization.

The inevitable result was, that the christian religion continued to become degraded as the moral and intellectual sentiments of man became depraved, until it was deprived of all its purity and simplicity, and became a system of superstition and absurdity, founded upon false miracles and pious frauds, frequently of the most scandalous and immoral character. And as it was thus diverted from its original character, the ecclesiastical power became the temporal and spiritual tyrant of the professors of christianity. The Roman pontiff governed the christian world; kings and emperors held their authority by his sufferance; men believed that their eternal salvation depended upon his will; he exercised supreme jurisdiction upon earth, and held the keys of heaven.

Thus were the nations professing christianity, comprising most of the nations or hordes of Europe, and some of those of Asia and Africa, held in the most servile and abject religious vassalage. The ecclesiastical power was used for the accomplishment of the basest purposes, and the practice of religion became little else than the practice of folly, fraud and outrage; yet, even debased and corrupted as it was, it did not fail to produce beneficial results. No system of superstition and absurdity can be so gross but that it will find devoted believers during such ages of mental darkness. Indeed, no religion could in those ages attract and retain the attention of the masses, unless it appealed to the senses instead of the reason, and presented to the public gaze a myth of incomprehensible mysticism, and thus the turbulence and violence of those ages were frequently held in check. But the emancipation of the human mind

from this religious thraldom was an achievement which required the efforts of ages. For ages the struggle was desperate and doubtful, and religious tolerance, as it this day has its home in every civilized nation upon the earth, was nurtured by the blood of millions of heroic and devoted christians. But although the christian religion has been divested of most of the monstrous errors and superstitions which were bequeathed to it by the dark ages, yet there are many errors and follies still connected with its practice, which deserve the serious attention of every candid and reflecting person.

The foregoing rapid sketch is deemed essential to a proper understanding of the true foundation of religion in human nature, in order that we may correctly understand the religious follies and errors of the present age. From this sketch it will be observed that the greatest follies and errors, and even outrage and wickedness, of which man has ever been guilty, has resulted directly from the perversion of his religious sentiments. But as long as man remains a fallible being, it is impossible to prevent folly and error, in some degree, from mingling in all human affairs. But the nearer he approaches the proper development of all the faculties of his nature, the nearer he approaches to perfection, and the more he perverts these faculties, or neglects their proper development, the farther he departs from the true design of his being, and, consequently, the deeper he sinks into vice and crime. Now, the religious sentiment of man being the noblest faculty of his nature, it is, consequently, of the greatest importance to him that this faculty should be cultivated and developed by the practice of true religion. We have seen the evils into which false religion has led

man, we shall see the benefits and blessings which true religion can confer upon him.

But the error which necessarily results from human fallibility does not, by any means, defeat the efficacy of true religion. As the dark spots upon the disk of the sun are invisible amid the dazzling brightness of its effulgent light, and do not prevent its genial warmth from bringing gladness to man, and infusing life and activity into all the energies of nature, neither do the slight blemishes of unavoidable error upon the loveliness of true religion prevent its genial influence from arousing into action and invigorating all the most ennobling and elevating sentiments of human nature. These necessary errors are not the cause of any of those gross and glaring follies and absurdities which bring shame and disgrace upon the very name of christianity. True religion can be attained only by directing the religious sentiment of human nature, by the dictates of properly developed and well cultivated reason. If this sentiment is unduly exercised and not properly controlled by reason, superstition and fanaticism are the inevitable results; but when the reason is not properly cultivated, this sentiment is not brought into proper exercise, and then indifference to religion is the result.

Either of these defeats the design of human intelligence. But if it be urged that those who have attempted to reason upon religious subjects have frequently reasoned themselves into a disbelief of all religion, we urge in reply that this is the fault of false religion and not of true reason. Reason revolts with disgust at the spectacle which religion presents as it has generally been practiced among men. It is not very strange that reason should some times condemn religion, when religion has

brought so many evils upon man, and led him into such irrational errors and superstitions. But such is not the result of true reason. Properly developed reason will never condemn true religion, because great evils have resulted from false religion, but it will alike condemn false religion in all its shapes, and give its assent and aid to true religion. It will discriminate between the proper use and the abuse of the faculties of human nature.

The principal reason why the originally pure and simple system of christianity has been confused and mystified in later ages by so many errors and superstitions is because it has denied to reason its proper office in directing the thoughts and actions of men. Christianity has been so bedeviled by those who profess it, that it is now impossible even to define what it is. If you ask one christian what it it is, he will tell you that it is Methodism; ask an other and it is Presbyterianism; and so on, in almost endless variety; but if we were to undertake to define it, we should say that it is none of these. We are told that the christian religion is a religion of faith, that is, we must believe what the preachers tell us. Now we may believe any one of the different kinds of christianity, but we must not exercise our reason; but we must have faith in its truth, because it is said to be derived from the Bible. Thus we are supplied with a kind of ready-made religion by a set of persons whose business it is to manufacture the article, and we are required to swallow it without asking any questions as to whether it is pure or poison. Now, if religion consisted entirely of Divine truth, this principle of passive faith would be perfectly right; but where this Divine truth is so much mingled with human error and folly, as it has been, and still is, it will not do to put implicit faith in whatever is

huckstered to us in the name of religion. When the real truth of the Bible is so overgrown with human error, if we place implicit faith in whatever purports to come from the Bible, we will believe more error than truth.

It was this principle which sustained a belief in the pretended miracles and pious frauds of the middle ages, and upon it is founded many of the religious follies of the present age. How many religious doctrines are there which their professors dare not submit to the test of right reason, but around which they have thrown the inviolable pale of sacred mystery, which they fancy they have tortured from the meaning of the Bible. Most persons do not practice religion because their reason teaches them that it is right that they should, but because the Bible says so; and hence, in forming their religious beliefs, they deprive themselves of the indispensable aid of reason, and imagine that any meaning which they can possibly torture out of detached portions of the Bible, is necessarily and unavoidably true. Hence the numerous and antagonistic sects of christians, all professing to derive their creeds from precisely the same source.

The christian world reads several hundred different and distinct kinds of religion out of the same book, all pretending to differ from each other in important and essential particulars, and if we are to take the present condition of christendom as the test, the Bible has several hundred different and distinct meanings. This is simply absurd, and irresistibly forces the conclusion upon us, that none of these constructions are completely in accordance with the spirit and truth of the Bible, for as no two of these sects agree in their doctrines of belief, and as no person will, for a moment, contend that the Bible has

so many inconsistent and opposite meanings, or that its truth and spirit can be subdivided into so many contradictory and antagonistic elements, but as it incontestibly has but one meaning, and teaches but one religion, it follows, conclusively, that no two of these different kinds of christianity can be right, and if any one of them is right, all the rest are wrong. Such being the case, we may safely conclude, that no one of all these differing sects embodies in its creed the true spirit and meaning of the Bible. Yet there are many members of all these different sects, who so confidently believe in the divine origin of the forms and dogmas of their particular kind of christianity, that they sincerely believe that they are traveling the only road which leads to heaven, and that there is no hope for the salvation of those hardened heretics who construe the scriptures and worship God different from themselves.

Indeed the subdivision of christianity into so many conflicting doctrines and beliefs, necessarily involves this uncharitable principle, or it involves a most unchristian spirit of strife and contention. But, says the devout and charitable member of a christian sect, I do not believe that the members of our church are the only ones that will be saved, but I believe that the sincere and faithful members of other evangelical denominations will also be saved. Very well. What, then, is the use of all this rancorous caviling, this inveterate spleen and invective, this interminable and maddening controversy about different doctrines and tenets, so contrary to all true christianity, if all of them are equally good? If all the evangelical churches teach those fundamental principles and doctrines which are essential to salvation, why do you divide the army of the cross into distinct detachments, and charge them against each other, instead of di-

recting their united force against the real enemies of christianity? If you really believe that the devout members of other evangelical churches are as well entitled to salvation as the members of your particular church, why do you go on caviling about non-essential forms? why continue to distract the world with your religious dissensions, until christianity presents the appearance of a heterogeneous mass of antagonistic elements, hissing and stewing as if they would consume each other? If you are all agreed upon what it takes to constitute a true soldier of the cross, why not discard all little minor differences about uniform and tactics, and march in one unbroken phalanx to expel vice and wickedness from the world, and establish the reign of the homogenous elements of true religion? Why not? Why these sects have distorted the Bible until it has hundreds of different meanings, and reason is not allowed to interfere to affect a reconciliation between the contending parties.

One sect has tortured this meaning out of the Bible, and, therefore, it is true, and any person is a heretic who doubts it. An other sect has tortured this meaning out of the Bible, and, therefore, it is true, although contrary to the other, and any person is an infidel who does not believe it, and so on until the different and conflicting meanings of the Bible amount to hundreds, and, according to the different sects, you can not be saved unless you believe all of them. There are more different forms of christianity than there ever were of paganism, yet, all christians profess to worship the same Supreme Being, and to derive all their doctrines and beliefs from the New Testament, as plain and simple a book, and as clear of mystery and obscurity of meaning as any book ever written; while paganism professedly worships an indefinite

number of gods, and derives its doctrines and beliefs from the infinite sources of caprice and superstition, without any generally received system of precepts, upon which to found a unity of religious belief. If christendom worshiped different gods, or derived the manner of worship of the same God from different precepts, then all this variety of religious belief would be reconcilable, at least with the conduct of rational beings. Mohammedanism, like christianity, is founded upon a single system of precepts, and they both worship the same God; but the Mohammedan religion has never been divided into numerous contending sects, and with all its errors and superstitions, it has been professed by a larger portion of mankind than the christian religion.

If the fundamental doctrines of christianity are true, and it is really founded in the principles of "peace on earth and good will among men," why does its practice produce so much difference and contention among its professors? This can not result from the practice of true religion. It does not result from the practice of the precepts of true christianity, but from the error and false doctrines which deluded men have mingled with those precepts. If all the error and distorted constructions which ignorance and superstition choose to engraft upon the truths of christianity are to receive the sacred character of those truths, and then this mass of mingled truth and error is to be regarded with holy reverence, and we dare not question its truth or genuineness, because it is said to be contained in the Bible, the sooner such a system of religion is swept from the earth the better. Who will dare deny that the most gross and absurd errors have been engrafted upon these truths in past ages, that these truths and errors have alike received

the reverence and veneration of professing christians? If any christian of the present day believes that all these errors have been exploded and removed, and that the truths of Scripture now stand forth unadulterated and free from error, let him at once be undeceived.

Sacred error has always been the withering curse of christianity, and has obscured the plainness and simplicity of its truths; error, which could not for a moment stand the test of reason, did not its supposed sacredness forbid the use of reason. It is the error which has become associated with christianity which has caused men to understand it differently, and prevented them from understanding it correctly. Its simple truths could lead no man astray. But we will never acknowledge the sacredness of error, and we shall strike it fearlessly, whether we find it concealed in religious sectarianism, or even within the lids of the Bible. If the Bible is true, it can stand the test of reasonable investigation; if it is not true, in God's name let its falseness be exposed. The fact is, that men fabricate all kinds of conflicting and discordant doctrines and beliefs by distorting the truths of Scripture, and then back up their own fabrications by the authority of God, and teach them to their followers as the true spirit and meaning of the Bible, and the devoted believers religiously stifle the teachings of their impious reason if it dare to suggest that any thing so sacred as these religious hallucinations could possibly be false. We may admit that the christian religion is of divine origin, but we will not admit that all the human errors and superstitions which have been engrafted upon it are also of divine origin. Persons who devoutly love and cherish the belief in the divine origin of their religion, without reflecting upon this important dis-

tinction, unconsciously work themselves into the belief that all that they find connected with that religion is also divine and sacred, and, as according to sectarian religion, the most that men are required to believe are only the opinions and doctrines of men which are supposed to be founded upon Scripture, it results that christians very frequently believe that to be of divine origin which is only of human fabrication, and hence it is, that, instead of the one "straight and narrow way," we have so many by-paths and crooked roads, and we have christians traveling to heaven in every imaginable direction.

The different christian sects are so attached to their particular creeds and forms of worship, that the religion of the present day consists too much in merely conforming to these outward forms and ceremonies, while the purifying emotions of true religion never reach the heart. All these different forms and distinct divisions of the christian religion being considered as of divine origin by the sect which professes each, they are regarded with holy reverence; and how often are the cardinal doctrines of christianity entirely lost sight of in the scrupulous observance of these various forms of human error. Most of the christian denominations very nearly agree upon all the cardinal doctrines of the christian religion; but one sect insists upon engrafting this sacred mystery, or that particular notion or opinion upon these cardinal doctrines, and an other sect insists upon engrafting upon them entirely different and contrary mysteries and opinions, and thus a division into sects occurs, not on account of any irreconcilable difference of belief in regard to the essential principles of christianity, but in regard to the manner in which those principles shall be mystified and falsified. A scrupulous adherence to

particular forms and ceremonies is not generally an indication of true religion, but of the want of it. When a division occurs in a christian denomination, it is not generally caused by a difference of belief in regard to the essential doctrines of the christian faith, but the members disagree about non-essential forms and opinions, and in wrangling about these they lose sight of all religion, and split because they can not agree upon which error they ought to believe.

True christianity can be established, and a uniformity of christian belief secured only by the proper development of the moral faculties of the human mind, and by submitting unreservedly all religious subjects to the test of enlightened reason. As long, as human error can be mingled with the Divine truths of christianity, and avail itself of the sacredness of their character, and thus escape the scrutiny of reason, it is impossible to eradicate error from religious belief, and harmony in religious sentiments will be unattainable, because of the infinite forms and shapes which this error is continually assuming. There is no principle or precept connected with true christianity, and which is essential to its complete adaptation to human condition which is shrouded in inscrutable mystery. So far as it is necessary for man to understand it, it is a plain and simple system, but he obscures and mystifies it himself, and then deprives himself of the only means by which these mysteries and errors can be removed and prevented. Correct reason acknowledges the truth of the christian revelation, and placing itself upon these truths, it, and it only, can guard them against assailing errors and superstitions. It is questioning the justice of God to suppose that he has not revealed all that is essential to our religious welfare, and it is nothing but an unholy attempt to defeat His designs, to re-

fuse to employ all the faculties and powers with which he has endowed us, to enable us to correctly understand those revelations.

But, let not this argument against christian sectarianism be construed into an argument against christianity itself. The religion itself is of Divine origin, but during its long terrestrial residence, many human follies and extravagancies have become associated with it, and, in the course of succeeding ages, this truth and error have become united and grown into religious systems, and it much needs the aid of enlightened reason and unprejudiced investigation to separate them. But, let us have christianity. If we can not have it without sectarianism, let us have it with it. The good results which flow from its practice, even thus adulterated, very far over-balance the evil ones. But in becoming members of a christian sect, let us strive to become christians instead of sectarians; instead of blindly worshiping the forms and follies of human invention, practice the plain and simple precepts of true christianity; in this way, and in this way only each member may effectually promote the most important interests of the christian religion, that of liberating the sacred prisoner from the fetters of human error. Let us remember that we are not registered in the Book of Life as Methodists, Baptists, or Presbyterians; let us remember that when we shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body, we will not be judged according to the multiform errors and follies of christian sectarianism, but according to the truth and spirit of the christian revelation.

In no sphere of life is self-delusion so manifestly displayed as in the practice of religion. It frequently happens that the glaring disagreement between the

profession and practice of christians is the result of hypocritical motives, but more frequently it results from self-delusion. If we calmly reflect upon the subject of religion, we must conclude that there is nothing legitimately connected with it which can engender the fiercer passions of our nature; no real inducement or temptation to introduce falseness into its practice, or to submit it to the debasing influences of worldly motives. There are no incentives to action in the whole routine of human duty in which there is so little real inducement to inconsistent conduct, as there is in the practice of religion, and yet, there is no sphere of duty in which so much inconsistency and falseness are practiced. This strange effect, which is so palpably manifested in real life, must have a producing cause, and this cause, as we conceive, is the result of delusion or a misconception of the real nature of religion, for the profession of religion is wholly voluntary upon the part of the person who makes it, and as it is not a necessary qualification to the enjoyment of any of the pleasures or emoluments of this world, and as it is not the test of respectability in society, or the road which leads to honor, it seems strange, indeed, that persons should make a profession of religion, except in earnest sincerity, and that there should be such a radical disagreement in its profession and practice.

The rewards of a religious life are professedly to be enjoyed in a future state of existence, although virtue, which is the most essential element of all true religion, confers its own rewards in every state and condition of existence, but the religious sentiment of man has a special and exclusive relation to his immortal existence beyond the floods of time. Every person who makes a profession of the christian faith, acknowledges that the flimsy vail of hu-

man appearances can not conceal the real condition of the human heart, or the real motives of the human mind, from the eye of Omnipotence, although they may be too deep for the penetration of human sagacity. But as religion has a reference to the relation which exists between God and man alone, and no reference whatever to the relations which exist between man and man, the superlative folly of pursuing that course of conduct which can only deceive man in a matter to which he has no relation, but which, it is confessed, can not, in the least, deceive God, to whom it alone relates, would seem to surpass even the inconsistency of deluded humanity.

How often is it that persons make the loudest professions of religion, and seem to think that it is only necessary to keep up an apparent conformity of their practice to their profession before the eyes of men, and while their professions are of the most pious character, their actions are at variance with all true religion, even with justice and moral duty. Do they not know that man has nothing to do with it; and that it is not the profession of religion which their Creator will reward, but the practice of it; and, therefore, that the profession is entirely non-essential, but that the practice of true religion is the only road which leads to eternal happiness? Notwithstanding this is in accordance with the simplest principles of the christian religion, yet too many of its professors are severely scrupulous about their professions, and their observance of forms, which are merely the chaff of religion, and strangely careless about their practice, which is its real essence, and while it is the corner-stone of their faith that God will judge them according to the deeds done in the body, and not according to empty professions, they

present before man the most righteous professions, and before God the most unrighteous deeds.

"Give, and it shall be given unto you," says their profession; "Get all you can, and keep all you get," says their practice. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them," says their profession; "Take care of number one," says their practice. Thus, while their professions are entirely orthodox their practice is completely heterodox. Christians seem to place the most entire confidence in the forgiving mercy of God, and in the never-failing efficacy of prayer. If we are to take the actions of some of them as the test of their belief, they certainly believe that prayer is the means by which God has granted to the professors of religion the license to profess the saint and act the sinner. Day after day they openly violate the plainest and most essential precepts of christianity, and then, in humble prayer and penitential twang, they ask His forgiveness, thus reducing it to a systematic business to violate His revealed will, and then ask His forgiveness for it. Now, it may be that we are overruled by a supreme Being, to whom such a course of conduct is particularly gratifying, and that He loves to see men do wrong, just to get to forgive them. All that religion requires may be, just to sin and pray in the same proportion, and perhaps God instituted prayer for the express purpose of enabling man to sin with impunity. This may be all so, and if it is so, this class of christians is right, and by dint of frequent praying, they may safely get along with a great deal of hard sinning, and they may even violate the principles of common honesty and morality, and compromise the matter by praying.

As, for instance, one of them has made a "good trade," that is, he has given in exchange for some property some thing of less value, or perhaps he has taken advantage of the ignorance, or distress of some person, and purchased his property for less than its real value, which kind of trading many professing christians do not object to do, provided it can be done in a business way; and, with means thus obtained, he spreads his table with all the luxuries of the season, and then, with a face as long as the catalogue of his own transgressions, and as solemn as if he had lost all his friends, and a part of his money, he lisps forth in canting tones, "O Lord, we thank thee that thou hast supplied us with all the necessaries and comforts of life," etc., when the fact is that the Lord had nothing whatever to do with the rascally transactions by which these necessaries and comforts were obtained. If any one charge that we are speaking irreverently of sacred things, we say in reply that, that if such folly and hypocrisy as this is sacred, we plead guilty.

Many persons, also, seem to place great reliance in the saving efficacy of church-going. They seem to think that going to church, like charity, will cover a multitude of sins, and that all that religion requires is a regular attendance at the house of worship. They act as though they had made a regular contract with their Creator, the conditions of which are, that they shall attend church regularly, and in consideration of this they are hereafter to receive the rewards of religion, and, of course, according to this arrangement, it matters but little with what intention they go to church; whether the ladies to see the gentlemen, and the gentlemen to see the ladies, and all to look at each others' little bonnets and big skirts; just so they perform their part of the con-

tract. Now, if these assiduous christians have any such arrangement, we would advise that they have it reduced to writing, and signed and sealed according to law; for when they come to ask their Creator to perform his part of the contract, he might plead the statute of limitations against them, and thus they would be cheated out of all their honest labor in His vineyard here below.

What a fine piece of amusement it would be if one could read the various thoughts which are engaging the attention of a christian congregation while professedly engaged in worship. He would find young ladies very scrupulously conforming to the ceremony of kneeling in prayer, and peeping between their fingers at the "love of a bonnet," about the size of a saucer, stuck on the back of her neighbor's head; he would find others intently admiring the magnificent dimensions of an eighteen feet hoop, spreading the ample folds of an extensive stock of skirts, and all this decorated with a covering of dry goods of costly texture, the colors of which are more grand and gorgeous than the national stars and stripes. Then, again, he would find young gentlemen of most commendable deportment, whose refractory minds are unfortunately diverted from religious subjects by the array of beauty around them, and which they just happened to see, and are engaged in admiring, instead of repenting of their many sins. And there are older sinners in the pews whose refractory minds are not completely under the control of their religious sentiments; and while they are engaged in their religious services, on Sunday, they are thinking about their money-making operations for Monday; or, probably, maturing some plan by which they may make a "good trade"

with their neighbor, and by this means advance their respectability, both in the church and out of it.

There is religion in sacred music. Its sweet sounds awaken the purest emotions of the human mind. It recalls the fugitive soul from its wanderings amid the temporal objects and purposes of life, and strengthens it in its faltering efforts to ascend to the sublime contemplation of the infinite goodness of God; and thus while reveling in the regions of celestial beauty, it fervently pours out its oblation of sincerest gratitude and thankfulness. O! what can be more consoling to the struggling soul than the solemn strains of sacred music, when they are devoutly poured forth from every lip of a worshiping congregation; and every member feels that it is the voice of the soul speaking to its God? But how far, indeed, from fulfilling this sacred office is the fashionable music which we hear in our fashionable churches? It has ceased to be a religious service, and has been transformed into a scientific, artistic performance. It no longer invokes the purest emotions of religion, but only excites the admiration of the audience by its intricate difficulties, and as an achievement of science and art. The difference in the opera and the church consists merely in the word. The professional music performers, frequently receiving pay for their services, take their position separately from the congregation, and perform such music as they think will be most popular with their audience, and have the impudence and impiety to call this worshiping God.

Should there happen to be a pious christian in such a congregation who is so unfortunate as to be unable to worship in a fashionable and scientific manner, it is not expected that he will mingle his

simple devotions with the high-wrought harmonies of the scientific worshipers, for this would spoil the whole performance. It must be supposed that the Creator has a very refined and cultivated ear for music, and that He is exceedingly gratified by this modern improvement, by which they have changed His simple and humble services of worship into grand concerts and scientific musical entertainments. Science and not sincerity is the quality which is most admired in modern church music. If a sincere christian, who is not a scientific singer, feels like pouring forth the emotions of his soul in sacred song, all that he has to do is to hold his tongue, and listen to the concert which is being given by the performers in the gallery. Strange that he should suppose that his Creator would accept his sincere and devout worship, unless it was offered according to the rules of scientific music. Go learn progressive christianity, you antiquated piece of old-fashioned sincerity, go get your music teacher to learn you how to worship God. What a source of annoyance must those old-fashioned primitive christians have been to their fashionable and scientific Creator, when they had no more respect for his feelings than to worship him according to the dictates of true religion, and had not sense enough to hire some body else to sing their praises to him, because they could not do it scientifically themselves?

Religious emotions can not be regulated by fashion or science; they fade and wither away under the chilling influence; and where religious services are made fashionable and scientific, all the pure emotions of religion are destroyed, and in their stead we have nothing but the love of gaudy display and the observance of empty forms and ceremonies. But it will be said that the congregation are not prohibited

from taking part in the singing, but, on the contrary, they are desired to do so. It is true there is generally no direct prohibition, but there is what amounts to the same thing, when the church music is rendered so intricate and scientific that no person who is not learned in the science of music can take part in the worship. True, good singing is a very important part of worship, and therefore every christian should understand the elementary principles of vocal harmony; but the introduction into religious worship of the highest and most intricate order of musical science, the attainment of which is beyond the reach of the great mass of mankind, is a sin against God and man. It deprives the mass of christians of one of the most efficient means of worship, and one of the purest enjoyments of religion. Nothing can be more obvious than that if this part of worship is to accord with the spirit of true christianity, as revealed by its divine Founder, it must be kept plain and simple; yet the more intricate and scientific it is rendered, the more it is admired by professing christians.

The spirit of devout worship requires that all should join in this exercise, and that it should by no means be made a trial of skill and a display of science, and when this is the case, it can no longer claim to be a religious service, for the singers are wholly engaged in observing the intricacies of musical science, and the audience in listening to the scientific performance; and then, who is worshiping God? The custom of devolving upon a few scientific performers the discharge of this duty, which true religion requires that each person should discharge for himself, is nothing more nor less than an attempt to worship God by proxy. We may employ an other to discharge for us almost every other duty in life, but

by no means can we employ an other to worship God in our stead. It is an inalienable personal duty which He requires of every human being. It relates to God alone, and to him all human deception and falsehood are perfectly transparent, and therefore it is impossible to impose upon him as genuine religion our hypocritical professions. "O praise the Lord, all ye nations." Let every christian feel that it is his sacred duty to join in this part of the worship, and pour forth the gratitude of his soul in thankfulness to God, untrammeled by the chilling fetters of fashion or science, and join in the soul-inspiring strains of sacred song, until his pure and heartfelt devotions, clothed in the joyous garbs of sacred harmony, shall reverberate around the Eternal Throne.

An opinion seems to prevail very generally that religion requires an austere, and kind of monastic course of life, and that it peremptorily forbids the enjoyment of all the lighter and more blithesome pleasures and gratifications of our nature, and that it consists in a painful and unceasing effort to overcome every impulse and feeling of our more joyous emotions, thus transforming man into a solemn and melancholy being, depriving himself of all the legitimate pleasures of this world, in order that he may be happy in the next. Such an opinion was worthy of the ages of convents and monasteries, but it is certainly unworthy of an age in which the people profess to have shaken off the fetters of superstition, and are enjoying all the blessings of untrammeled religious freedom, amid the blaze of the light and knowledge which we at present possess. Such a system of religion defeats itself, by destroying the nice equilibrium in which the Creator has balanced the system of human nature, and which must be pre-

served in order to secure the harmonious action of all the faculties and powers which enter into and compose the physical, intellectual and moral constitution of man. True happiness and true religion are inseparable companions, and true happiness can be attained only by preserving this natural equilibrium, therefore the idea that true religion can be attained by destroying it is simply absurd.

There are many sincere christians who have fallen into this error, and suppose that in order to reach the most perfect state of religious existence, it is necessary to deny themselves all those pleasures and gratifications which do not contribute directly to the development of their religious nature. The error of this lies in the supposition that man is wholly and exclusively a moral or religious being, whereas, in fact, he is a physical, intellectual, and moral being, and each of these distinct natures requires its proper and legitimate exercise and gratification, and happiness and religion depend upon their harmonious development. Why did God endow man with faculties and desires adapted to the pleasures and enjoyments of this world, unless he intended that they should be gratified? The contrary doctrine is founded upon the supposition that God either could not create man without endowing him with faculties and desires, the gratification of which is necessarily wrong, or that he endowed man with these evil propensities, and then forbid him to gratify them, for the express purpose of rendering him miserable. The one hypothesis denies his Omnipotence, the other his beneficence.

For the purposes of this argument, we shall make two divisions of human nature; the one we shall call the physical nature of man, and the other his spiritual nature. By the one, we mean those faculties

and desires which relate to the enjoyment of man as a human being, by the other those sentiments which more directly relate to his welfare as an immortal being. The one may be considered the physical and intellectual, and the other the moral and intellectual. Persons whose piety is entitled to respect, are disposed to consider the latter as the only sentiments of the human mind which should be cultivated, and, consequently, they engage in a disastrous warfare with their own nature, by depriving the faculties of the former of their proper exercise and gratification. Although man's spiritual nature may very plausibly be considered as of the most importance, yet they are both of equal importance; for his spiritual nature can not be properly cultivated, unless his physical nature be also properly cultivated, and hence the only means by which man can attain true happiness as a physical and as a spiritual being, is by the proper gratification and harmonious development of all the faculties and sentiments with which his Creator has endowed him.

But, will any person deny that God has endowed man with faculties and propensities, the gratification of which relate exclusively to his enjoyment as a human being, faculties which are the means of his happiness as a mortal being. And if God, by conferring them, has thus unequivocally expressed his will, that they shall be properly gratified, does religion require that His will shall be violated, by denying to them this gratification? This is absurd, and hence it follows, that those who attempt to suppress the natural desires of either division of their nature, only attempt to defeat the evident designs of God. But the strict religionists say, that it is necessary to deny ourselves of the fleeting pleasures and enjoyments of this world, in order to enjoy the

eternal pleasures of the next. Ah! do they worship a God who has made present misery the condition of future happiness? The doctrine amounts to this, that God has endowed man with a nature, the slightest gratification of which is contrary to religion, that is, we will be punished hereafter for gratifying those desires which Himself has implanted in our nature, that is, God will punish man for what is the fault of his Creator.

But while we are speaking of the pleasures and enjoyments of this world, we must not be understood as advocating mere sensualism, or that man should become the votary of worldly pleasure. This is the very principle which we have repeatedly condemned. The excessive gratification of any faculty, whether it be of our physical or spiritual nature, is its perversion, and, consequently, is vice. The true theory is the excessive gratification of none but the proper and harmonious gratification of all the faculties of human nature, and when human nature is thus developed, the spiritual nature of man exercises a natural supremacy over his physical nature, and thus his lower faculties, or those which relate to the enjoyments of this world, will be gratified under the guidance of the moral and intellectual sentiments, and thus their abuse will be avoided. With just as much reason might we deny that God created man at all, as to deny that he endowed him with this twofold nature, for, wherever he exists, there we find him with the natural desire to gratify these faculties of his physical nature, and it always requires painful and vigilant watchfulness, to prevent the operation of this natural law, upon the part of those who deem it their religious duty to thwart the designs of God, by preventing the gratification of half their nature.

But if it be urged that excessive indulgence in

the pleasures and enjoyments of this world has caused much wickedness and depravity, and produced much suffering and misery, we willingly admit the fact. But, at the same time, we shall ask it to be admitted, upon the evidence of all history, that the perversion of man's religious sentiments has led to more wrong and oppression, to more suffering and outrage, than even the perversion of the faculties of his physical nature. The fact is, that all the faculties of human nature may be perverted, and lead to great evil, and, therefore, this can not be used as an argument against the proper gratification of any of them. If it be argued that, if we engage in the pleasures and amusements of life, we are frequently induced to indulge in them to excess, and are thus carried into the current of vice, and, therefore, we should avoid them entirely, it may be argued, with equal force, that the exercise of the religious sentiment of man frequently produces error and superstition instead of religion, and leads to cruelty and bloodshed instead of to "peace and good will to man;" and, therefore, man should not gratify his religious nature. Hence, if the force of the argument depends upon the amount of evil which has been produced by the perversion of each, it holds stronger against the gratification of our spiritual than our physical nature, and if it is wrong to gratify the faculties and propensities of our physical nature because their perversion produces evil, it is wrong to practice religion because its perversion produces evil.

Man is evidently placed in this world in a probationary state; he is endowed with faculties and sentiments which are strengthened and developed by his course of conduct in this life; those sentiments which constitute his spiritual or moral nature are

the immortal principle of man; and hence, it is our only reasonable conclusion, that the condition of his immortal state of existence will be determined by the manner in which these sentiments are developed in the present state of being. But man could not enjoy happiness in the present state of being by living solely in anticipation of the enjoyment of happiness in a future state of existence; and, therefore, the Creator, in his goodness and mercy, has endowed man with certain faculties and propensities, the gratification of which relate exclusively to the pleasures and enjoyments of this world. But the professors of religion of the present day pronounce most of the pleasures and amusements which afford legitimate gratification to these faculties to be sinful. They deviate as far from true religion by their over-strictness in this particular, as they do by their want of strictness in other particulars. The Creator has implanted within our nature the germs of gladness and joy; he has prepared all the means by which we may enjoy ourselves as human beings, without disqualifying us for enjoyment in a future state of existence. By endowing us with two distinct natures, he has qualified us for the enjoyment of the present and a future state of existence, and the proper gratification of each of these natures is the only means by which we can secure present and eternal happiness. But while God bids us thus to be happy, our severe religionists, with an awful solemnity, and a fearful frown, say no. This is all wrong. God did wrong by endowing us with faculties for the enjoyment of this world, and, therefore, we must correct his errors. The only way to be religious and happy is by perverting both our natures; our physical nature by depriving it entirely of legitimate gratification, and our spiritual nature

by its excessive gratification. We must cease to be human beings, and transform ourselves into *bogus* angels. The young lady, as she joyously and gracefully glides through the beautiful quadrille, affording virtuous and delightful gratification to her physical nature, without violating, in the slightest degree, any principle of true morality or religion, is only committing heinous sin by her gladness and joy. There is no recreation or amusement which affords more innocent and harmless exercise and gratification to qualities of our nature, which are essential to true happiness, than the properly-conducted cotillion party; false religion alone condemns it; our physical nature requires this, or some equivalent gratification, and there is no other amusement so innocent which can well supply its place. But we generally find that those who condemn this virtuous amusement, think that they are traveling the "straight and narrow way," by devoting all their energies to the accumulation of wealth, thus violating every principle of true religion and sound morality. We fear that when they get to the end of their pilgrimage, they will find that they have laid more treasures in this world than in heaven.

In no age of the world has man attempted to gratify exclusively his religious nature, and deny all gratification to his nature as a human being, but that it resulted in his overthrow as a rational being, and the violence done his physical nature invariably defeated his aims at spiritual perfection. We have only to refer to the monastic institutions of the middle ages, where their inmates withdrew entirely from the pleasures and gratifications of worldly enjoyments, and attempted to suppress entirely the desires of their physical nature, in order that they might devote themselves exclusively to the cultiva-

tion of their spiritual nature, and thus become exclusively religious beings. Were they successful? Such a course of life overturned the very foundation upon which nature stands, and which sustains the fabric of all true happiness and religion, and they became worthless and miserable beings, and the last emotion of true religious sentiment was driven from their minds, which became the abodes of the grossest fanaticism and superstition. As human beings, they were actuated by none of those emotions which ennoble human nature; they were lost to all those sentiments which elevate the human mind; as religious beings, they were the most morose, gloomy, and melancholy devotees that ever cursed the name of religion, and no gladdening ray of either physical or spiritual joy ever penetrated the gloomy darkness which shrouded their souls, while their daily conduct displayed that absurd austerity and disgusting appearance which true religion, above all other things, most abhors.

Such is necessarily the tendency of every system of religion which over-exercises the faculties of our religious nature, and unduly restrains the gratification of those of our physical nature. As soon as we attempt to excessively develop either of these distinct natures, we destroy the balance of our nature, and prevent its harmonious action, and that moment our capacity to achieve eminent success is at an end. If we refuse the proper gratification to the virtuous desires of our physical nature, and attempt to develop exclusively the sentiments of our spiritual nature, bigotry, and superstition are the inevitable results, and we lose all the sweetest consolations of religion, and, following its shadows and non-essential forms, we gradually sink deeper into the depths of withering asceticism, and make it a

conscientious duty to pursue that course of life which is most painful and revolting to all the unperverted principles of our nature, as they were bestowed upon us by the hand of God. If we neglect to gratify and cultivate the sentiments of our spiritual nature, and unduly gratify our physical desires, we reach the opposite extreme of our perverted nature, and, by gradually yielding to the temptations of sensual gratifications, we are carried into the swift current of vice and degradation. Thus either extreme inevitably produces confusion in the systematic combination of our nature, and destroys its harmonious action, and thus renders ineffectual our efforts to accomplish good. Harmony is the universal law which God has infused into all the principles of nature, and hence man can attain happiness either as a physical or as a spiritual being only by the harmonious gratification and development of all the sentiments and propensities which his Creator has implanted in the system of human nature.

Now, every pleasure or amusement which affords gratification to a natural and unperverted faculty of the mind, is innocent and virtuous, and every system of religion which condemns such pleasures and amusements, upon the ground that they may be abused, and result in evil, is false, for it practically condemns, upon the same grounds, the gratification of every faculty of the human mind, for they may all be abused, and produce evil. But our professors of religion assert that these pleasures and amusements divert the attention of the mind from the consideration of more serious and important subjects. Just precisely what we want. He who aims to keep the mind constantly and intensely fixed upon religious subjects necessarily becomes a bigot and a fanatic,

superstitious, but not truly religious. It has already been shown, that if we excessively gratify any faculty of our nature, and unduly restrain the gratification of others, it destroys the equilibrium of our nature, and thus we destroy our capacity for the accomplishment of good. The excessive exercise and cultivation of our moral and intellectual nature destroy our physical health; the excessive gratification of our physical nature destroys the health and strength of our moral and intellectual nature. Hence they must be harmoniously gratified, and, as the moral and intellectual sentiments exercise a natural supremacy in every properly developed mind, the propensities of our physical nature must be gratified under their guidance and control, and when this is the case, there can be no danger of our physical pleasures degrading themselves into vice. Would man follow that course through life which would afford the proper exercise and gratification to all the sentiments and propensities of his nature, on the one hand, and avoid the abuse and perversion of them on the other, he would be walking precisely in the path which his Creator has marked out for him, and would soon reach the highest state of happiness and perfection, both as a physical and as a spiritual being, which is attainable by man as a human being.

It is in accordance with this view of human nature that we are told, in the scriptures that there is a time for all things, *i. e.*, that there is a time for the gratification of our physical nature, and a time for the gratification and cultivation of our spiritual nature. But, we are told, that it is written in the scriptures, that we must deny ourselves, take up our daily cross and follow Christ. True. But, are we to understand that when we are called upon to deny ourselves, it is meant that we shall deny ourselves of the proper

gratification of those faculties with which God has endowed us? When it is said, that we shall take up our daily cross, is it meant, that we shall take it up and with it break all the natural laws by which God governs us as human beings? Is it not rather meant that we shall deny ourselves of the abuse of all our natural faculties, and thus avoid the consequent vices? Are we not rather called upon to deny ourselves of the abuse of our religious sentiment, which has led to more evil and wickedness, than the abuse of any other faculty of the human mind? Is it meant by taking up the daily cross, that we shall deprive ourselves of all the healthy and invigorating pleasures and enjoyments of our physical nature, which is the only secure foundation upon which we can place our religious welfare? Is it meant, that in order to follow Christ, it is necessary to convert the christian world into one vast, gloomy, solemn monastery, the disconsolate inmates of which, as they move about with faltering steps, and haggard features, and distressed appearance, but too plainly indicate their true condition, as they are struggling and suffering amid the wreck of human nature? Is it meant that the christian religion is intended to be a system of cold and blighting asceticism?

If man was intended to be happy in the practice of such a religion, the God of nature made an awful blunder in his work, when He created him; for man never has nor never can secure true physical or spiritual happiness by the practice of such religion. By such false constructions as these, our strict religionists give to many passages of scripture such meanings as are completely destructive of the best interests of religion. If there is a single passage in the Bible which, when we arrive at its true meaning, is contrary to the practical workings of nature, that

passage is utterly false, and not of divine origin, but of human invention. But, what evil genius has possessed these strict constructionists, which induces them, when a scriptural passage admits of an easy and rational construction, which accords entirely with the constitution of human nature, to try to force upon it some terrible and tormenting construction, which is entirely contrary to nature's laws? Is it their aim to make religion some thing terrible and torturing to human nature? and must man writhe and groan in the pillory of religion, and endure the punishment of self-inflicted torments, by depriving himself of the gratification of those desires which his Creator gave him, in order to make him an acceptable offering before that Creator? When a passage of scripture pleads with all the eloquence of reason and consistency for a construction which agrees with the laws of human nature, why do they persist in enforcing upon it a construction which not only strikes a deadly blow at human happiness, but also at the beneficence of God himself.

Does not man feel more grateful for favors bestowed than for wrongs inflicted? How much more sincerely thankful then would he feel toward his Creator, could he discover in all the works of nature only designs to favor him, and in the revealed word of God, nothing but an aim to promote his happiness and enjoyment, which is certainly the case, and not as some of our modern religionists would have it, that his Creator has bestowed upon him natural desires which are essentially wrong, and which he is required to overcome by refusing them all gratification. The consciousness of having received favors, always awakens in the human mind the purest emotions of gratitude and thankfulness; but the conviction of having been wronged never fails to engender

feelings of hatred and revenge. How much more sincere and heartfelt then would be the religion which, springing from the contemplation of the Creator as a supremely beneficent Being, all of whose designs toward man are founded in infinite goodness and mercy, than the religion which springs from fear and terror, from contemplating the Creator as some malignant Being, rejoicing in the miseries and sufferings of His dependent creatures, which are the necessary results of their nature, and which He purposely so created?

The religion of the present day is responsible for many of those evils and excesses in society which it is its professed object to prevent. It aims at nothing less disastrous than the absolute divorce and violent separation of the two natures of man. These two natures, although distinct in their functions and purposes, yet God has united them together in the even balance of nature by the most intimate and delicate ties; and this connection it seems to be the great aim of religion to sever. Thus, according to the prevailing creeds of orthodoxy, the first condition of our becoming religious is to deprive ourselves of many of the legitimate and essential pleasures and enjoyments of our present state of existence. This produces a continual struggle between nature and conscience; but violated nature is frequently too strong for her oppressor, she asserts her rights, and completely overthrows the artificial, sanctimonious picket-work which false religion has set up around the conscience; but when once she has bursted the fetters which so painfully restrained her action, a reaction takes place, she riots in the hour of victory, and frequently an abuse of natural faculties is the result; and thus many persons who seriously and conscientiously commenced the practice of religion,

end in the most disgraceful abuse of the faculties of their physical nature.

How frequently is it the case that we see persons enter into the practice of religion with zeal and determination, but, after a short trial, they find the task so painful and irksome that they relinquish entirely the hopeless effort, and cease to cultivate the sentiments of their religious nature? And it is too frequently the case with those who prosecute the painful task, that nothing except the hope of eternal rewards, and the terrors of infernal torments, could lash them into the performance of their irksome duties. Those who practice religion through the fear of the devil, we fear, will miss the "straight and narrow way;" yet it is through the influence of the dread of his satanic majesty, that the names of many persons appear upon the member rolls of our christian churches. We are of opinion that the devil, with all his infernal terrors, never yet frightened a trembling soul into the gates of heaven. Is true religion thus an irksome and painful effort? No. All true religion is based upon the proper exercise and gratification of every sentiment and propensity of human nature, and as we are endowed with no sentiment or propensity the proper exercise and gratification of which does not afford us real pleasure and enjoyment, it follows conclusively that the practice of true religion is the highest sphere of pleasure and happiness which man is capable of attaining in his mortal condition.

But the greatest evils which result from this unnatural religion are not those which relate to its professors. The joyless monasticism and painful self-denial which its practice requires, deters many sincere and well-disposed persons from embracing its profession, and thus the tendency is not to extend

the benefits and blessings of true religion to all mankind, but to confine even the profession of religion to those who are willing to deprive themselves of many of the virtuous pleasures and enjoyments of life, and believe that the more miserable and joyless they render themselves on account of religion in this world, the greater will be their rewards in the next. The existing systems of religion being thus repulsive to the unperverted attributes of human nature, the consequence is, that a large proportion of our people make no religious professions whatever, and thus the sentiments of their spiritual nature are not properly cultivated, and this generally leads to the undue gratification and abuse of their physical nature. The professors of religion running into one extreme has a natural tendency to force the non-professors into the opposite extreme, and thus the restraint which nature designed the higher sentiments of the mind should exercise over the gratification of its lower faculties, is removed; and this is the reason why so much debased carnality exists in the non-professing world. The only way to prevent all these evils is to avoid both of these extremes, by meeting upon the platform of nature, and enjoying all the pleasures and blessings of true religion, by gratifying all these faculties, and abusing none of them.

The moral and intellectual nature of man can not, indeed, be too highly developed, provided his physical nature be proportionably developed, and the balance of nature be thus preserved; but all history and experience conclusively proves, that the exclusive cultivation of man's religious nature, leads to nothing but religious bigotry and superstition, which completely defeats the object of all true religion. It is, therefore, not only the privilege, but it is the religious duty of every person to engage in all those

pleasures and enjoyments which afford proper gratification to any unperverted faculty of human nature, whether physical or spiritual; but as the great source of our happiness is the proper gratification of our moral and intellectual sentiments, it follows that the greatest portion of our time and effort are to be devoted to their cultivation.

It is true, that many of the secular pleasures and enjoyments which afford gratification to the physical nature of man, are, at present, much corrupted and debased, and, consequently, do not exert a virtuous influence upon the faculties of the mind. But why is this so? It is because the religious portion of community have thought it their duty to deny themselves the enjoyment of these pleasures and amusements, and, consequently, they have too generally fallen into the hands of those who are not actuated by so high a tone of morality. But no person will say that this is necessarily so. The sources of our physical gratifications may be kept just as pure as the sources of our spiritual gratifications, and both may be kept much purer than either one is at the present day. It is certainly the duty of every moral person to discountenance the debased and licentious gratification of the faculties of man's physical nature; but it is no less his duty to encourage their virtuous exercise and gratification. These pleasures and amusements are essential to human happiness, and it only requires the countenance and support of the moral and religious to purge them of all their impurity, and to render them eminently conducive to the best interests of true piety and virtue. These gratifications may be brought up to any standard of purity and morality which the public may demand, and the professedly moral and religious defeat their own aims, by not providing for

the people a greater variety of pleasures and amusements, and keeping them pure and virtuous, by participating in them themselves, for the nature of man urges him to seek these enjoyments, and not finding those which are innocent and harmless, he indulges in those which are vicious and sinful. True religion demands them, bigotry and superstition alone condemns them. Every system of religion which is not founded upon the proper exercise and gratification of every sentiment and propensity of human nature, is too narrow for the religion instituted by the God of nature.

It is the divorce of religion from nature which prevents the former from producing those grand results which must flow from the practice of true religion. So far as we know, there is no religious denomination which attempts to conform its system of religion to the operations of the works of God, as manifested in the constitution of man. If we are to judge from the doctrines which are taught us in the name of christianity, God has constituted a system of human nature, and then given us a religion, for the guidance and control of that nature, which conflicts with it in the most essential particulars. The teachers of religion seem to be thoroughly convinced that it is some thing profoundly mysterious, that it relates to the supernatural instead of the natural, and they discard all natural constructions, merely, because they are simple and reasonable, and thus they are soon lost in the labyrinth of sacred mystery and complicated error. It is singularly strange that they have never discovered that the nature of man is the only key which will unlock the mysteries of revelation. Revelation is addressed to man as he exists in this world, and hence it is adapted to this

state of existence, and we can ascertain the true meaning of the former only by the light of the latter. Hence if we would understand the Scriptures, we must study the nature of man, and in all our constructions of the word of God we must be guided by his works. Man is certainly the work of God, and if the Scriptures be the word of God, there can certainly be no disagreement between them. Thus, by the proper use of reason we can understand the Scriptures, by studying them in connection with human nature.

But instead of being thus governed by the only reliable guide they can have, christians, in construing the Scriptures, reject all external aid, and believe that any meaning which they can torture out of the Bible is necessarily true, although obviously absurd, and thus with nothing to guide them to the true meaning, false constructions are necessary consequences; and this is precisely the cause which has led to all the error and superstition that has been practiced in the name of religion. Bishop Butler has shown us "The analogy of religion—natural and revealed to the constitution and course of nature," but he only considered its analogy to external nature, and did not attempt to demonstrate the perfect adaptation of religion to the constitution and course of human nature. It is very true that nature and religion are analogous, because they are both of divine institution, as every thing is analogous which God has created and man has not perverted. But if religion and external nature are analogous, which have no closer relation than that they were instituted by the same divine hand, how perfect must be the agreement of true religion and unperverted human nature, which are not only the work of the same Divine Workman, but by Him adjusted and adapted to each

other? But although they are thus perfectly adapted to each other by the hand of God, they have both been perverted by human folly and ignorance, and hence their great and most unfortunate disagreement. God has joined them together, but man has put them asunder. And while neither can be properly understood without thoroughly understanding both, and by studying the one, as the only means which can unfold the mysteries of the other, it is a melancholy fact, that neither is correctly understood, and the inevitable consequences are, the world is filled with false religion, as the necessary consequence of the perversion of the one, and with suffering and misery as the necessary consequences of the perversion of the other.

Nor can we see any prospect that these two relations, which the Creator has so intimately connected, will soon be reunited by the bond of truth. The teachers of religion refuse to look to the natural constitution of man to aid them in arriving at the true religion of man. They forget that the revelations of God consist of two volumes, and that the first volume is human nature, and that this volume was first written by the Author of nature, and afterward the volume of his revealed word, that his will is more plainly revealed in the first than the last; but a correct understanding of both is indispensable to the proper appreciation of the will of God, and to the practice of true religion. We know that God created man and endowed him with all the attributes of his nature, therefore, if the doctrines of the Bible can not be made to agree with the principles of human nature, we are left no option in the matter; we must regard these doctrines as untrue, or charge our Creator with inconsistency. If there are any passages in the Bible which will not admit of a

reasonable construction, which will preserve complete harmony and agreement between the word and work of God, we have nothing to do but to discard such passages as untrue.

But as many of these passages are construed by the ultra religionists of the present day, they are completely contrary to the works of God, insomuch that if they are true, as thus construed, the grand scheme of human nature, as the spirit of God has moved it for six thousand years, is nothing but an eternal falsehood, propagated by the Creator himself; and not only this, but they render those passages conflicting and contradictory with themselves, and if the superstitious mystery and sacred error which conceal their discrepancies be swept away, the whole system would fall asunder as an incoherent mass of inconsistencies. This results principally from two causes; first, from the attempt which the teachers of religion make to construe the scriptures without regard to the nature of man; and secondly, from a too literal construction of the language of the Bible. They are not yet attempting to construe the word of God upon the principle of its complete correspondence with his works, and refuse to see the intimate relation which exists between the faculties of human nature and the religion which must result from the exercise of these faculties. We are told that religion is a matter of faith; *i. e.*, we must believe whatever they tell us, and that the only attribute of our nature, which we are allowed to exercise in the practice of religion, is our credulity; and that we are pious just in proportion as we believe the distorted doctrines and constructions which are huckstered to us in the name of christianity.

If our theological teachers correctly understood the works of God as they are manifested in the nature

of man, they would then possess the only means by which they can gain admittance into the storehouse of divine truth, where the Creator has deposited all the rich treasures of true religion. The very fact that so much bigotry and sectarianism exists, proves conclusively that the religious world is not pursuing that course which is designated by the Author of nature. He speaks to man in the language of nature, and every pleasure which we enjoy by the proper gratification of any of our natural faculties, is the voice of God speaking within us, and assuring us, in unmistakable tones, that we are pursuing the path which he has prepared for us, while every pain which we feel, and every anxiety and superstitious terror which result from the abuse of any natural faculty, is the voice of God admonishing us that we are departing from the paths of virtue and religion. All the sentiments and propensities of human nature are so many finger-boards, which God has placed along the journey of life, and upon which he has plainly written the direction to happiness upon the one hand, and to misery upon the other, and toward the one or the other of these destinations each successive revolution of the wheel of time rapidly hurries us. Upon this great thoroughfare mankind are continually passing and repassing, and while one portion is traveling the road which leads to happiness, and are enjoying the rewards of obedience to the will of God, the other portion is traveling in the opposite direction, disregarding all the admonitions of their Creator, and hurrying on the road which leads to misery. Why do we go wrong when the direct road is made so plain? *It is because those upon whom we rely to guide us in the journey of life can not read the writing which God has written upon these finger-boards.*

But we have said that many religious errors result from a too literal construction of scriptural language. Every person who reads the Bible is aware that a large portion of it is written in a figurative style, and hence, it is perfectly obvious, that by giving a literal construction to these figurative expressions, a false meaning is obtained, and thus many sincere christians are led into error. While we accept the Divine origin of the christian religion, it must be especially understood that we do not accept as divine every thing which comes to us in the name of christianity. We have seen too much error and hypocrisy practiced in the name of christianity to be willing to yield a ready assent to whatever chooses to assume its sacred garb. We have seen too many false and contradictory meanings tortured from the Bible, to believe that every construction which can be forced upon a passage of scripture is necessarily true. We know too well the uncertainty and ambiguity of human language to believe that every thing that it may be supposed to mean, is the will of God. Now, if we could arrive at the true meaning which the Apostles intended to convey, we would certainly have true christianity, but the very fact that their teachings receive so many conflicting constructions, which lead to so many different sorts and shapes of christianity, is conclusive evidence that their true meaning is greatly misunderstood.

This error results, in a great measure, from literal construction of scriptural passages, and while scrupulously adhering to the letter of the scriptures, they have almost entirely forsaken their true meaning and spirit. Even when we admit that the teachings of the New Testament are the emanations of the Divine will, we must recollect that these emanations

are transmitted to us in human language, and that all human language, as well as all other human inventions, partake of the fallibility and imperfection of man; and hence, when we rely entirely upon the language of the Scriptures to guide us to Divine truth, we are liable to be led into error at every word. Human language can not be so written, whether the writer be inspired or not, but what it will admit of different constructions, and when all reason is thrown aside, almost innumerable meanings may be forced out of the same composition. To prove this, we have only to instance the many different meanings into which the Scriptures have been construed. We are willing to admit the spirit and principles of true christianity are of Divine origin, but we most emphatically deny that human language is, and the imperfection and ambiguity of the latter has led the christian world into numerous different paths, and christianity has become a mingled mass of truth and error. These evils result from making the Bible the only source of religious knowledge, and then by giving literal constructions to its metaphors, and absurd constructions to its plainest passages, it may be made to mean just precisely what it is wanted to mean; and, in order to facilitate the operation of manufacturing different kinds of religion out of the same materials, they refuse the aid of reason, and all the lights with which the Creator has illuminated the natural world by which they may plainly see the way, and persist in construing the Bible detached from every thing with which God has connected it, and detached from itself, and thus they make it say every thing but what it really says, and mean every thing but it what really means.

From these reflections we conclude that it is impossible to understand the true meaning of the Bible,

or to comprehend the true spirit of christianity, by confining ourselves to the texts of Scripture. These texts having been subjected to all the ambiguity and uncertainty of human language, it is obvious that we must have some external light to guide us to truth, amid all the conflicting creeds and doctrines by which we are surrounded and confused. If we take these creeds and doctrines separately as the test of the Bible's meaning, it means every thing; if we take them collectively it destroys itself, and means nothing. The only light which can afford us this indispensable aid, and bring the religious world, which has gone so far astray, back to true religion, is the light of nature. Let unperverted reason hold up this light before the world, and by it read the texts of Scripture, and then the God of the Bible, and the God of nature will be found to be the same consistent Being, and the real beauties and harmonies of his natural and revealed will fully displayed. The Creator having revealed his will to man by two distinct means, his word and his work, the one of which is necessarily subjected to the fallibility of human language, the other written in the inexorable and unchangeable operations of his natural government, the understanding of both is indispensable to the understanding of his will. If we study either separately, we are led into error. We can not understand the operations of nature, except by the revelations of the Bible; we can not understand the revelations of the Bible, except by the operations of nature. There is no disagreement in these two volumes. But man made the language in which the one is written, and construes its meaning to suit his own fancy and caprice. God instituted the operations of the other; and he alone controls them. The language of nature is the language of God; it is

not affected by the fallibility of human inventions; then, why not study the will of God, as revealed in the language of nature, to afford us a sure guide amid all the uncertainty and misunderstanding of the language of his Word?

Thus have we considered the subject of religious fancies and follies. Conceiving religion to be some thing pure and holy, and regarding the sentiment of the human mind upon which it is founded as the noblest attribute of man, we have labored earnestly and fearlessly to divest religion of the follies and errors which have become associated with it in its earthly residence, so that it may stand forth before the world attired in its own pure and heavenly garbs. Believing in the infinite beneficence and goodness of God, we can not but believe that the practice of true religion is the only means of enjoying true happiness in this world, and of securing its enjoyment in a future state of existence. But in order to enjoy true religion, it is indispensable that we arouse ourselves from that passive reverence which causes us to venerate whatever comes to us in the name of religion, thus throwing the door wide open for the admission of error, and yielding ourselves willing votaries to the practice of false religion. The more important and sacred a truth is, the more vigilant and earnest investigation and watchfulness it requires to protect it against the adulterations of error. Truth loves candid and intelligent investigation, error alone fears it.

ESSAY VI.

MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

THE ABSURDITY OF ITS SPIRITUALITY EXPOSED, AND THE NATURAL CAUSES WHICH PRODUCE THE PHENOMENA EXPLAINED.

WERE it not for the purpose of making an earnest attempt to develop some of the principles upon which have been, in all ages, and still are, founded some of the most absurd of human follies, we should not venture into the unknown regions of human nature into which we are now about to make an exploration. We are about to explore a vast desert, into which but few travelers have ventured, a region invested with mysterious awe and sepulchral terrors, inhabited by unearthly gnomes, ghosts, specters and spirits, but which, quitting their mysterious abodes, play strange freaks with human beings; a region in which the established laws of nature hold not their sway, but in which the regular government of God is superseded by the reign of goblins and demons. But let not the reader who proposes to accompany us in this journey among sepulchral terrors and unearthly shades, be startled, for, if he is armed with an abiding faith in the omnipotent providence of God, and is willing to behold His works as they are displayed before him, he will only behold the natural creation of God, and never once get in sight or hearing of one of these mysterious phantoms. And if he is not thus

prepared for the journey, let him come along without fear or faltering, for, without boasting of any superior courage or strength, we will pledge ourselves to protect him against the attacks of unearthly existences, and guarantee to him a safe return, without harm to body or soul.

This region, wherein dwell these sepulchral phantoms, seems to form a bridge across that unfathomable and incomprehensible abyss which separates our present from our future state of existence; and thus the believers in spiritualism seem to suppose that there is a supernatural communication established between the earth and heaven or hell, or whatever other transmundane sphere in which the departed spirits of dead men may be located, and, moreover, that all this seems to be gotten up on a kind of supernatural telegraphic system, by means of which the denizens of this earth can send dispatches to the spirits of departed friends, which spirits, not contented with dispatching back the news in the celestial spheres, but availing themselves of their spiritual or fluidic nature, they get aboard of the supernatural telegraph, and are actually transported back to our mundane sphere, and manifest their presence here by a system of rapping, thumping, upsetting tables, and playing smash generally with our household goods, and conducting themselves in a manner that does not by any means become well-behaved spirits.

But, like Commodore Stockton, who was sent on a mission to certain paradoxical celestial spirits, who have not yet removed their quarters from our earthly sphere, for the purpose of opening up with them an international exchange of opinions and commodities, we are bound upon a voyage of discovery among spirits even more paradoxical than our earthly celestials, for the purpose of investigating their real

nature, and, if the project be practicable, to cultivate with them friendly and neighborly feelings, and form with them a kind of treaty of peace and commerce. For, judging from the wonderful revelations which they make to their special friends here among us, unraveling every mystery, (except the mystery of their own nature,) discovering the hidden and revealing the sublimest truth, it certainly will be of the greatest importance to avail ourselves of their friendly aid. But let it be distinctly understood that, in making this exploration, human science can afford us no aid. Legitimate science has not yet been able to offer any satisfactory explanation of the strange phenomena, which we shall meet at every step. Fluid action and animal magnetism, the only means by which this supernatural apocraphy can be pretended to be accounted for, are not yet admitted into the family of sciences, but are themselves discarded with as much contempt as the phenomena which they attempt to explain.

Men of science have been satisfied to pronounce that a humbug for which they could by no means account. This is certainly an easy mode of disposing of the question, but it leaves it entirely untouched, and the very fact that the scientific and talented are thus unable to meet and successfully contend with it, invests it with tenfold more power to operate effectually upon the unprotected credulity of the uneducated portion of the community. It appears to us that this is the principal reason why the delusion has spread itself so widely through the country, and many unsuspecting and sincere persons have become its victims merely because its phenomena seemed to speak to them with a strange and supernatural authority, which they could not explain upon natural principles, and, consequently,

were induced to believe that they were produced by some supernatural agency.

It makes no difference with how much contempt science may regard these phenomena, still they exist, the raps are produced, furniture is moved, and persons, acting through its influence, perform deeds which seem far beyond the scope of human agency; all these things are performed every day, and legitimate science acknowledges her inability to account for them upon any of the known principles of nature. Every day we are confounded by prodigies which seem to subvert the laws of nature, and we have among us sorcerers, who are holding communion with demons and devils, and at the pleasure of any spiritual medium any number of disembodied spirits may be summoned up from beyond the grave, to divulge the hidden secrets of heaven and hell. If all this be true, the government of God by a system of established laws, the operations of which we daily observe, is merely an imaginary scheme, and the Bible is all an unfounded farce. Now, if these phenomena are not produced by natural agencies, we must admit the conclusion that they are produced by supernatural agencies; science is asked to explain them; she answers that it is all a humbug, and refuses the desired information. The truth is, legitimate science is completely nonplussed; she can offer no satisfactory explanation. We therefore can not enter upon the investigation with entire confidence, but we feel sure that if we do not succeed in assigning to these phenomena their proper natural causes, we shall at least be able to divest them of all claim to spirituality.

The retrospect of human history continually displays a decided fondness in man to attach undue importance to miraculous manifestations. In the midst

of the mental darkness by which he has been surrounded, he has groped his way in doubt and uncertainty, amid phenomena which were to him incomprehensible, and has attributed to supernatural agency those natural manifestations which his ignorance alone has prevented him from discovering the true cause. There is scarcely a natural phenomenon which has not, in some age, given rise to superstitious fears, and many of the natural manifestations, which so clearly attest the omnipotence and beneficence of God, has been attributed to the threatenings of offended demons. Even in the golden age of antiquity, when monuments of literature were reared, which have successfully withstood all the ravages and vicissitudes of time, and will be read and admired as long as human intelligence shall exist, in those ages when the deeds of heroism and patriotic devotion were performed, which have wreathed the proudest laurels that ever graced the brow of man, in those ages in which, in many respects, he attained the noblest attitude he has ever yet achieved, even when he thus stood forth in all his pride and strength he was startled and terrified by imaginary phantoms, which he supposed to be supernatural, but which were only the creatures of his own superstition and ignorance.

Augustus Cæsar, the champion of the Augustan age, who enslaved the Roman world, the hugest colossal of human power that has ever yet been reared in all the annals of time, was himself the slave of the weakest phantoms that ever frightened deluded man, and even wore an amulet about his person, to protect him against the influence of evil spirits. Cicero and Pericles had their talismans. Classic antiquity resounds with the orgies of superstition and demonology. Here we meet one of the most difficult problems in human nature, a strange and

apparently inexplicable anomaly, and in its solution is comprehended the reason why man has, in all ages, been the victim of phantoms, and has persisted in subjecting himself to the government of demons. When we seriously reflect upon the learning and literature, the art and science; the heroism and patriotism of ancient Greece and Rome, and view man as he there stood forth in all his nobleness and grandeur, whose deeds in every department of human action yet shine forth with undimmed luster, with all this scientific and intellectual greatness, it seems strange indeed, that he should tremble and turn pale before the power of an imaginary creature, and live the slave of abject superstition, the absurdity of which it certainly seems that the most inferior intelligence should expose.

When we read of the efforts of their soldiers, poets, orators, and statesmen, the greatness of which, in many respects, can, perhaps, never be excelled by the powers of the human mind, it seems utterly unaccountable that they should acquiesce in and believe doctrines and notions which not only outrage the dictates of exalted reason, but are contrary to the plainest teachings of common sense. Those who could conquer nations and rear intellectual monuments as enduring as time, were themselves conquered by ideal supernatural phantoms, which should frighten only the weakest and most degraded of the human species. But in order to reconcile this apparent anomaly, we have only to consider the real condition of man during the classic ages of antiquity. He was ignorant in the midst of all his learning, and feeble in the midst of all his strength. Although poetry and eloquence attained their Augustan age, and art and science engraved their lasting impressions upon the records of time, yet man was really

ignorant of himself, of his Creator, and of the true principles of the natural world in which he was placed. What availed then all their classic lore, what their mighty empires and armies, what their proud achievements in art and science? When they looked abroad upon the glorious works of God, when they beheld the mighty machinery of the Universe, all was darkness.

They were ignorant of the unchangeable and inexorable laws by which they were governed in every condition of human existence, and regarded their operations as the results of the power of the lifeless deities which they worshiped. Unassisted human reason, even in the boasted ages of classic antiquity, was incapable of comprehending the grand truth of the creation.

"And look through nature up to nature's God."

The mightiest of the Grecians and Romans, those upon whose beck hung the destinies of nations, never undertook an important enterprise, without consulting the oracles, sibyls, and sorcerers, who pretended to hold communion with spirits and demons, and the fate of empires was frequently decided, and the blood of thousands of human beings shed, on account of the hallucinations of some crazy woman, who pretended to interpret the will of some supernatural agency. But let us not take an uncharitable view of the ancients. Let us not rashly charge them with unreasonable superstition and inconsistency. The days of oracles and sibyls have long since passed away; the sibylline books have given place to the Bible, and man, in his onward progress, through the cycles of time, has acquired a knowledge of the Supreme Arbiter of nature, and the events which decide the destiny of individuals and nations, are not

now, as then, believed to be the result of unfathomable mystery, but are known to result from the regular operations of established laws. Standing as we now do in the middle of the nineteenth century, and viewing, in the midst of its scientific and intellectual splendor, the character of the ancients, it seems strange indeed that such gross errors and superstitions should be thus mingled with such profound genius and intelligence.

But let us not boast of our own moral and intellectual purity and perfection. Let us not suppose that the advance of time and truth has entirely eliminated error and superstition. Although intelligent persons at the present day would disdain to consult heathen oracles and sibyls, yet there are those among us boasting of superior light and intelligence, whose errors and superstitions are more absurd and inconsistent than those which were practiced by the ancients. It is impossible for man to entirely avoid the commission of error; it is the inevitable result of the inherent fallibility of his nature. Let human rationality be developed to its fullest extent, and all its faculties be brought into the most effective exercise, and yet error will be more or less mingled with all human transactions. But this unavoidable error is not such as poisons the very fountains of human happiness, and leads men into beliefs and superstitions so absurd, that they indicate the entire want of the exercise of rational faculties, instead of their proper exercise; for if this were the case, He who founded the scheme of nature, would be a malevolent instead of a benevolent Being.

Those who advocate the doctrine of the inherent corruption and depravity of human nature, necessarily charge God with malignity of purpose. They can not escape this conclusion, except by resorting

to the flimsy excuse of clerical jargon, and piously believe absurd doctrines, forged out of Scripture, in spite of truth and reason. The study of the established laws of God, and a steadfast confidence in His perfect beneficence, lead us unavoidably to the conclusion, that when all the human capacities are fully developed, and brought into exercise in accordance with the designs of God, notwitstanding the fallibility of human nature, man will enjoy true and uninterrupted happiness. We, therefore, arrive at the conclusion, that the gross errors and superstitions which have in all ages prevented man from becoming thus happy, are not the inevitable results of the inherent qualities of human nature; but they are wholly and entirely the results of the ignorance of man, and of his perverse neglect and abuse of the requirements of his nature.

Human depravity is the result of human conduct, and man acts as he does principally in consequence of his ignorance of his own nature. The great mass of mankind, who are honestly and seriously striving to walk in the paths of virtue, and to live in accordance with the will of God, frequently act in a manner which has a more or less depraving influence upon their nature, because they are ignorantly and unintentionally violating natural laws, the inevitable penalties of which are misery and depravity. Can any person suppose that man, endowed as he is, with the faculties of rationality, if those faculties were kept unperverted, and he was left unfettered as to his actions, would voluntarily and intentionally pursue that course of conduct which inevitably leads to suffering and misery, rather than that which leads to peace and happiness, if he clearly understood the true causes which determine the question of misery or happiness? The principal reason why we have so

much human misery is, because man is ignorant of the actual conditions of his happiness. He does not most frequently violate the laws of nature wilfully, but he does so ignorantly, without knowing what their actual requirements are, and when the inevitable penalty follows, he attributes his misery to the mysterious dispensation of God. If it be said that men are frequently hurried on in their career of vice and degradation by the fierce and uncontrollable passions and appetites which seem to be an insurmountable part of their very nature, we answer, that these debasing passions themselves are the penalties of violated natural laws; and did man know himself, and act like a rational being, these degrading passions, which have ever been the curse of man, and the bane of society, may be almost entirely eradicated from human nature. These inhuman passions are the result of the undue gratification of our animal nature, and the neglect of the proper cultivation of our moral and intellectual nature, whereby the law of our nature is reversed, and our conduct is controlled by our animal propensities, instead of our moral and intellectual sentiments, and we become mere animals instead of rational and moral beings.

But all the errors and superstitions by which man has been blindfolded in every age of his existence, result from the same cause, viz: his ignorance of the real conditions of his earthly existence. While he is ignorant of the true causes which produce the effects which are continually occurring around him, he is necessarily led into error. While the learned sages of antiquity were ignorant of the Great First Cause, they attributed the natural phenomena which were daily manifested around them to the intervention of false gods and demons, while our modern spiritual sages, being ignorant of the natural cause

which produces the strange phenomena which are manifested before them, attribute them to the intervention of departed spirits, which have long since taken up their abode

> "In that undiscovered country, from whose bourne
> No traveler returns."

Nothing but an intimate acquaintance with truth, and an immovable reliance upon the absolute administration of the eternal Governor, can safely guide us amid the complicated labyrinth of ever-varying phenomena through which we are bound to pass in the journey of life. But when we confidently place our trust in him, and seriously seek to discover, and conform to, the requirements of his laws, effect follows cause with perfect regularity, and his Supreme beneficence, and stern, but impartial justice, are displayed in every event and phenomenon which occur in all the affairs of this world; but when once our confidence is unloosened from the firm fastenings of eternal truth, all is mystery and painful doubt. Every effect is necessarily mysterious to man, of which he does not understand the true cause, and if he can not discover the cause within the narrow limits of his own knowledge, or if the phenomena appear strange, or different from those which are commonly manifested in the usual course of nature, he is strongly disposed to attribute them to some mysterious and unnatural agency. And when he views them through the false medium of his own ignorance, it operates like the double convex lens of a telescope, and magnifies very natural phenomena into startling wonders, and, if we are to believe the exaggerated reports which we hear, we must believe that nature has nothing else to do but to per-

form frantic freaks to frighten ignorant men and women.

The reason that the operation of the natural laws appear irregular to man, is because he is ignorant of them. God governs the universe to-day by the same immutable, unchangeable laws that he did at the time of its creation, and, we are confident, will continue to do so until time shall be no more; and, during the whole period of time, there has not been, nor will be, the slightest irregularity in their operation, except when they are miraculously suspended by his Omnipotent power, and that no instance of this has occurred since the days of the Apostles, and very few miracles occurred at that time, or prior to it. Notwithstanding this perfect regularity in the government of God, man, through his ignorance of the natural laws, and of the true causes which control his existence, persists in discovering, in their regular operation, an inexplicable maze of mysterious phenomena and supernatural manifestations, as though we were under the government of ranting devils and demons. But let us pursue the argument demonstrating that man's belief in the false supernatural, such as the intervention of spirits and demons in human affairs, results from his own ignorance and distorted conceptions, and that such belief is, in no case, justified by the actual experience of life, or by the real phenomena of nature. Now, it seems to us that, in this enlightened and christian age, it is certainly unnecessary to assert that no agency or power can interfere with the operations of nature, except that of God alone, and that no spirit, demon, ghost, or other supernatural phantom, can set aside the operation of natural laws, and set up a system of supernatural phenomena upon its own account, and in opposition to those laws. But

it may be said that it is in accordance with nature that we should receive communications from departed spirits. Why is it, then, that some six thousand years have elapsed under the regular administration of the same natural laws before any rapping spirits dared to manifest themselves by thumping about the dwellings of men? Why do they come lagging up at this late period of time, without any excuse for their long delay? How does it happen that they lay slumbering in their sepulchral regions, while century following century rolled on their ceaseless course, and never availed themselves of the natural law which permitted them to come back and chat with their brother spirits which were yet dwelling in the flesh, in the language of table-rapping and tilting, and inform them how their departed friends were getting along on the other side of Jordan? how does it happen that these spirits never availed themselves of these important privileges until they happened to be resurrected by the Misses Fox some eight years ago?

If they could have come back at all, old Adam's spirit could have just as well made the trip the next day after his death, as the spirits of those who died yesterday, and if it was right that they should come back, why have they so long deferred the discharge of their duty? But, perhaps, becoming very anxious to have a chat with their old friends upon the earth, they have at last succeeded in availing themselves of their spiritual nature so far as to escape the laws of nature, which operate so sternly upon us who are yet dwelling in the mortal coil; and all at once here they come in great droves, overspreading the whole country, and being anxious to make up lost time, they are ready to be summoned up at any moment, to rap out all manner of nonsense and

create a regular rumpus among our household and kitchen furniture. Or, perhaps, it has been reserved for this fast age of railroads and telegraphs, when the power of steam has been converted into the obedient servant of man, upon sea and land, and his messages are conveyed upon the wings of the lightning, reserved for such an age to open up a regular communication with the spirit world.

The day may be near at hand when the antipodes of the earth shall be engaged in daily conversation, by means of the submarine telegraph, and although we believe that human art and science may yet make many more wonderful achievements in the realms of physical nature; yet we have no confidence whatever in the practicableness of this new supernatural telegraph upon which our modern spiritualists pretend to be already operating. Man may sink his submarine cable in the Atlantic ocean, and thus establish regular communication between continent and continent, but when he comes to sink his cable in the dark ocean which separates the present from the future world, he has no means of venturing upon its dark bosom except through the portals of the grave; a voyage from which no human bark has yet returned. When we come to investigate the communications which are pretended to be received from the spirit world, we think they will be found to be not entirely reliable, and that the telegraph by means of which they are conveyed, instead of having its opposite terminus on the other side of Jordan, has its communicating office not very far from the operator who receives the messages. Although strange coincidences may occur, and we may have singular preconceptions and admonitions, yet it is very certain that we have not yet had evidence sufficiently conclusive to justify the belief in supernat-

ural manifestations, and the presence among us of spirits which the laws of God have inexorably consigned to a different and unknown state of existence.

Mysterious phenomena have been manifested in different ages of the world, and there has yet been no age in which there have not been sincere believers in the false supernatural, and the entire failure and the exposure of each succeeding delusion, has not prevented men from following every erratic phantom which comes to them clothed in garbs which, to their deluded minds, assume a supernatural appearance. History establishes beyond all controversy the fact, that when man is placed under certain circumstances, and under the influence of certain feelings and thoughts, strange and mysterious phenomena are the results. At various times and places, the victims of delusion have gone into convulsions; at others, they have gone into trances, and had visions and prophesied; at others, they have been the subjects of witchcraft; and now these delusions have assumed the form of rapping spirits. If we examine the facts which history has recorded in regard to these delusions, we almost come to the conclusion that the bulwarks of nature are being swept away; that she is tottering upon the solid rock of her foundation, and is no longer moving in the course of her regular operation.

But when we consider that the phenomena which attend these delusions are only transient, that they are manifested only at indefinite periods and in certain localities, and that they prevail as a kind of epidemic; and that nature stands unswerved from her true course by all these assaults, and when the delusions have passed away, and their victims come back again to the observance of her requirements, they are no longer troubled with strange visions, or

convulsions, or hallucinations, but move along in nature's regular course; when we consider all these facts, we may safely conclude that these delusions, with all their attendant mysteries, result more as the consequences of human error and ignorance than from supernatural causes. Now, as the natural laws are perfectly regular in their operations, and as the irregularity of these phenomena is one of their chief characteristics, it is reasonable to suppose that they are not the necessary results of the operation of natural laws.

But these phenomena are the effects which are produced by the operation of natural laws upon the circumstances which result from human action. The natural laws being unchangeable, if the circumstances upon which they operate were regular, there would be no fluctuation in human affairs; but these circumstances change with every day, and hence it follows clearly, that the variety and uncertainty of human affairs do not result from the uncertainty or changeableness of natural laws, but from the extreme variety and changeableness of the circumstances which are produced by human conduct, and upon which these laws operate.

There have been mysterious phenomena manifested at different periods, which it is impossible for us to explain in a satisfactory manner; but this is because we are not sufficiently acquainted with the natural laws which were operating upon the peculiar circumstances which were at the time prevailing. But this one fact has, in all cases, been observable, that in order to produce mysterious phenomena, it was necessary that a peculiar and unnatural train of circumstances should be existing, and that the phenomena continued to be manifested while these circumstances continued to exist, and ceased when they ceased to

exist. There is not an instance upon record, where, when human conduct was controlled by enlightened reason and a properly cultivated nature, a single phenomenon has been manifested which could, with any show of reason, be ascribed to a supernatural agency. These mysterious phenomena have generally resulted from religious fanaticism and superstition; thus conclusively demonstrating the great outrage that is done to nature and to the will of God by the excessive exercise of the religious sentiments.

The review of history establishes the fact, that ignorance and the belief in the false supernatural, have, in all ages, existed together, and, wherever ignorance has prevailed to the greatest extent, there has this belief most generally prevailed, and so invariably has this been the case that we can not avoid the conclusion that the latter is a legitimate consequence of the former. During the middle ages, when the profoundest ignorance prevailed in every race and tribe of man, the belief in the false supernatural was almost universal. Christianity, as it existed in those ages, was nothing but a myth of error and superstition. False miracles were innumerable. The bodies of departed saints became the objects of worship, and their bones were supposed to be a secure protection against the influence of evil spirits. All believed in the power of witches and sorcerers; and demons and evil spirits were continually manifesting their presence by the exercise of their diabolical power. Old women were supposed to possess the power of making themselves invisible, and in this state they were transported to the *sabbat*, or the council of the demons, where they plotted against the peace of man.

Thus we see that during those ages when mankind was most ignorant, the belief in all kind of unnatural

existences most generally prevailed. That most of the phenomena ascribed to those ages never had any existence, we presume every person will be ready to admit. They were the creations of distorted imaginations and perverted natural faculties. They were the superstitious terrors which always roam about in the realms of ignorance. When man views things through the false medium of his own gross ignorance and superstition, he ever has and ever must see frightful demons and unearthly specters; but when he looks at things through the medium of truth by the means of enlightened reason, no ghostly apparitions present themselves to his view, nor specters nor spirits trouble him with their manifestations. Why is it that all manner of ghosts and goblins, spirits and demons, so infested the earth from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries, but are now no more heard of, except a few frightened and cowardly spirits, who do not dare to manifest themselves to any but those who are ignorant and credulous enough to believe in them? Why is it that these supernatural and diabolical existences disappear from the earth just as soon as intelligence and enlightened reason assume the control of human conduct? Why is it that they torment, with their mysterious manifestations, ignorant persons, and even intelligent persons, whose minds are filled with all manner of mystical and superstitious conceptions, and never dare to meddle with persons of sound education, whose minds are not distracted with error?

The truth is, that most of these appearances are merely the creatures of disordered imaginations. It is a principle established by the God of nature that when man is thus deviating so far from the principles of truth, and thus rushes headlong into the grossest error and absurdity, the mind becomes

filled with mystical and superstitious notions, and these imaginary phantoms appear as a natural consequence. They never appear except when nature is greatly outraged, and the mind is deluged in error. As the person who has greatly outraged his nature by the excessive use of artificial stimulant has the *delirium tremens*, and sees snakes, and all manner of hideous shapes and terrors vividly represented before his mind, so the person who has greatly outraged his nature by reflecting upon and believing gross errors and absurdities until the mind has become perverted and distracted by the unnatural exercise, as a natural consequence he imagines that he is surrounded on all sides by unearthly spirits and specters, and these mental apparitions possess just as much reality in the one case as the other. These apparitions would seem to be the hideous sentinels which nature has placed in the desert wastes of error, and which burrow in the gloomy dells of superstition, to warn man that he is wandering far from the paths of peace and truth. Let any person who sees them be assured that he is very far from the straight and narrow way. They never venture into the light of intelligence and truth, which, shining like a glorious sun in the firmament of human existence, enables man to walk forth with confidence and without fear of stumbling, but they prowl about in the regions of mental darkness and superstition, and harrass and frighten those who are traveling the journey of life through the dreary deserts of error.

But it must not be inferred that every ignorant person is a deluded one, or that every learned person is a wise one, for this is by no means the case. It is not merely scientific lore, which confers upon its possessor the inestimable gift of truth, for we have seen that the classic sages of antiquity were

the dupes of the most miserable delusions. It is that schooling of the mind, that thorough appreciation of the principles of divine truth, which may be comprehended by the unlettered man, and yet may escape the astuteness of the most learned philosopher. Although the unlettered man may not be profound in the rules and problems of human science, yet the light of truth may shine clearly in his mind; while again we may master the deepest intricacies of science, and measure the magnitude of distant worlds, and possess all the rich treasures of physical and metaphysical learning, and yet all these may only form the clouds which obscure the light of divine truth. Yet it is our ignorance which leads us astray. We may be learned in every department of human science, and yet be ignorant of the most important principles of truth. The whole truth is not an essential concomitant of science, nor yet is it always the reward of sincerity. We may possess all the light of human learning and yet be in utter darkness in regard to our most essential interests. As man is endowed with a twofold nature, the one of which constitutes him a physical or human being, and the other a spiritual or immortal being, so are there two distinct departments of truth, the one of which relates to the truth of this world, and the other to the truth of a future world. And as the fullest perfection of our twofold nature can be attained only by the proper exercise and harmonious gratification of both of them, so can we acquire the whole truth only by earnestly and devoutly studying both its departments, the knowledge of the one preventing us from running into error in the study of the other, and the knowledge of both affording a clear and unwavering light by which we can behold

all the beauty and loveliness of nature, and the perfect goodness and beneficence of nature's God.

The belief in the false supernatural indicates ignorance in both departments of truth. As knowledge of spiritual truth would teach man the utter absurdity of the belief in the intercourse of departed spirits with human beings, and a knowledge of physical truth would teach him the physical causes which produce the phenomena which are falsely attributed to spiritual agency. We are ready to admit that there have been phenomena manifested in different ages of the world, for which physical science is unable to give a satisfactory explanation, but we are not ready to place ourselves upon the platform of the middle ages, and attribute to the intercourse of supernatural agency every phenomena of which we do not understand the natural cause. Must we say that, because man through his ignorance can not satisfactorily explain a certain phenomena, it is not the result of the natural government of God, but the freak of some straggling ghost or rollicking spirit? But physical science has made sufficient progress to explain most of the phenomena which ignorance has attributed to supernatural intercourse, and of those which science does not explain the precise cause, it is sufficiently demonstrated that they are the phantoms of error, which result from the abuse and perversion of the faculties of our nature.

But let us adduce a few facts in regard to popular delusions which have swept multitudes before them, in order to show that this new-born delusion of the rapping spirits is not the only one which has shipwrecked the confidence of men, and led them into error. We will first notice the Cévénol prophets, or

Camisards, who flourished in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Space will permit us to make but a single quotation, which shall be a fair sample of the whole record. These facts are gathered from the very fountain-head, and are well authenticated. Elie Marion thus records his experience:

"When the spirit of God takes possession of me, I feel a great warmth in my heart, and its vicinity, which is sometimes preceded by a shuddering of the whole body. At other times it seizes me all of a sudden, without my experiencing any presentiment of it. When I find myself seized, my eyes immediately close, and this spirit causes an agitation of my body, making me sigh heavily, and giving vent to broken sobs, as though I had difficulty in breathing. I quite often experience very severe shocks, which are unaccompanied by any sensations of pain, nor do they deprive me of the power to think. I remain in this condition for a quarter of an hour, either more or less, before I utter a single word. Indeed I feel that this spirit performs in my mouth, the words he wishes to make me pronounce, and which are almost always accompanied by some extraordinary agitation or motion, or, at least, by great fear. There are times when the first word that I am to pronounce is already formed in my mind; but as a general rule, I am ignorant of what is to be the termination of the word the spirit makes me commence. It sometimes happens that I think I am about to pronounce a word or a sentence, when my voice utters only an inarticulate sound."

These are not exactly rapping spirits, or such as make tables dance, or pianos stand on their hind legs, but it appears that they have much more complete control of their victims. It seems strange, indeed, that the religion of Christ should have such an effect

upon its professors, yet all this resulted from nothing else but religious frenzy. The christian religion did not thus affect the apostles, nor does it at present affect its sincerest professor in this manner. These Camisard prophets saw visions, had trances, convulsions, and ecstacies, spoke in strange tongues, and very frequently expressed thought, and spoke in strains of eloquence, which very far surpassed their natural abilities. They professed to receive special inspirations from God. A person who was inspired, breathed into the mouth of one who was to receive that spirit of prophesy, and said: "Receive the holy spirit," and immediately the newly elected began to speak by the spirit, and was capable of transmitting the inspiration to other aspirants. Yet these inspirations soon passed away, the Camisards ceased to have trances and convulsions as soon as they returned to religious moderation, and from raving maniacs they became humble christians, shuddering at the very thoughts of their past errors and delusions. Who will dare assert that the miserable delusion of the Camisards was the result of Divine inspiration? yet this would be more reasonable than to assert the spirituality of the rapping phenomena of the present day.

We will next briefly notice the Jansenists, or the convulsionaries of St. Medard. This delusion prevailed in France about the middle of the eighteenth century, and like that of the Camisards, it resulted from religious error and fanaticism, and the phenomena manifested during the prevalence of both were very similar, the difference naturally resulting from the different circumstances under which they prevailed. Here again we meet with ecstacies, convulsions, trance-speaking, speaking strange languages, elegant language and eloquence from the most illit-

erate persons, etc. The facts are these: the Deacon Pris, who died in 1727, was regarded with the most holy reverence by his followers on account of the incredible austerities which he practiced, and the zeal with which he opposed an unpopular decree or bull of the Roman Catholic Pontiff. His tomb was visited with as much devoutness as the sepulcher of Christ, pieces of the furniture he had used were cherished as holy relics, the earth which surrounded his grave was supposed to possess a potent influence, which threw those who swallowed a small portion of it into trances and convulsions, in the midst of which they acted like maniacs, but spoke words of inspiration. An infirm person having been placed upon the venerated tomb was seized with convulsions. The news of this supposed miracle spread, and with it the epidemic, and thousands of invalids resorted to the cemetery of St. Medard to be healed. These violent convulsions afforded relief to a few of the sick, and others naturally recovered their health, and this was sufficient to spread abroad the report that all the sick were healed merely by touching the tomb. But let us have some of the phenomena. We quote from Montgeron, the best authoity on the subject. Geoffrey, one of the leaders of the delusion thus expresses himself:

"The convulsive movements to which I submitted, without losing consciousness, obliged me to beat my feet against the ground, the pavement, or the marble of the tomb. I could not prevent these movements. Sometimes my head tottered and turned a long while, sometimes my arms grew stiff and rigid. At other times I threw them about on all sides, and my body often turned round and round as though on a pivot. The pains I suffered were beyond any thing I can express. The same movements took place at the

house, with this difference, that they were not so intense. I have been assured, that in the fit in which I lost consciousness, my eyes rolled back, and all the movements I have already mentioned were much more violent. I invariably felt some relief after the convulsions, and this relief was greatest after the most violent shock."

The same author gives the following declaration of the girl Fourcroy: "Having entered into the cemetery of St. Medard, I was struck with terror at the cries of suffering, and the howls that reached my ears from the convulsionaries in the cemetery and under the charnel-house, whereupon I thought I would go away without approaching the tomb of the deacon; but being encouraged by the person who accompanied me, I sat down upon it. Almost at the same instant I was seized with a shudder, and shortly after with a great agitation in my limbs, which made my whole body spring into the air, and gave me a strength I have never felt before. In the course of these violent motions, which were real convulsions, I lost consciousness. As soon as they had passed away, and my senses were restored to me, I felt a tranquility, and an internal peace hitherto unknown."

There is nothing in the least unnatural in this girl having convulsions upon taking her seat upon the tomb with her mind in such a state of feeling, and surrounded by such circumstances. But there are other phenomena recorded in connection with this delusion which we can not be induced to believe, although they seem to be sustained by reliable evidence, and even admitted by the enemies of the convulsionaries. Such as this: "Jeanne Mouler, a young woman of twenty-two or three years of age, having supported herself against the wall, one of the stoutest men seized a fire-dog, weighing, it is said, twenty-five or

thirty pounds, and struck her powerful blows in the stomach. This operation was repeated on various occasions, and at one time more than a hundred blows were counted. Another day having given her sixty, he tried the effect of similar blows on the wall, and it is stated that at the twenty-fifth blow he made an opening in it." The same author continues: "The exercise of the plank succeeded. They placed upon the convulsionary, lying on the ground, a plank, which entirely covered her; then, as many men mounted on this plank as it could hold. The convulsionary bore them all. More than twenty men have been seen together on this plank, which was supported by the body of a young convulsionary." And all this instead of giving them pain, only afforded them relief.

It may be that our nature may be perverted to that degree which, operating with some unknown physical cause, may produce these effects, but our skepticism upon this point is insurmountable. Why is it, that we no longer hear of the miracles and convulsions of Saint Medard? We now no more hear of persons being placed upon the venerated tomb, and by its supernatural or diabolical influences, being transformed into raging demoniacs. A person whose mind is free from the delusion and free from epidemical influences, might sit there until the sounding of the last trump, and he would not receive inspiration, or become capable of withstanding the blows of the fire-dog.

But let us pass to the Ursulines of Loudun. Here we have another religious delusion, producing the most melancholy and disastrous results. How fearfully does God punish the excesses into which man is led by false religion. All these delusions resulted directly from the perversion of the christian religion.

The city of Loudun contained one of those large convents of nuns founded in the sixteenth century, under the patronage of the English Saint Ursula. According to the established regulations of these nunneries, the inmates were entirely secluded from the world, deprived of all useful and virtuous occupation, and their time was spent in brooding over the most gloomy and austere superstitions.

It is related that some of the younger nuns, whose joyous nature rebelled against the unnatural restraint, amused themselves by terrifying their companions. Arraying themselves in the supposed habiliments of ghosts, they passed along the roof and entered the apartments of their unsuspecting sisters. This, together with the state of feeling which prevailed in the nunnery, was sufficient to produce ghosts and goblins in abundance. Then the nuns, as the nervous excitement increased, became possessed of witches and devils; they leaped and howled, performed surprising feats of strength, and exhibited a most frightful and disgusting spectacle. It attracted the attention of the authorities; intelligent and sincere men became its dupes, and Urbain Grandier, a noble and brilliant curé, was convicted of witchcraft, and burned at the stake. We should notice that when the Archbishop of Bordeaux ordered the sequestration of the demoniacs, and threatened to punish those who should yield to the supposed machinations of the devil, all their ravings immediately ceased. The demons which appeared to be so very unruly while they were permitted to have their own way, became perfectly docile when they were properly managed. The only real devils or witches that had any thing to do with the possessions of Loudun were the nuns themselves.

But why need we dwell upon the delusions which

have existed in other countries. We have had a Cotton Mather and a Salem witchcraft in our own, and the fairest temple of liberty ever reared by man is stained with the blood of twenty innocent victims, executed as witches. Every American reader is familiar with the facts of the Salem Witchcraft, and we shall not repeat them. It does not differ materially from the possessions of Loudun, except, perhaps, the phenomena which attended the latter were more mysterious and more strongly manifested than those of the former. It seems to us that our American witchcraft is the shallowest of all delusions that have ever misled intelligent men. They were deceived by the voluntary ravings of mere children, and the pranks of the little unconscious deceivers were fostered and sustained by their parents, and particularly by the clergy. How very natural would it be for children to make grimaces, and perform frantic capers, when they perceived that thereby they became the center of attraction and sympathy, which is so exceedingly gratifying to youthful vanity. In the state of feeling which prevailed, every person who did not sympathize with the "afflicted" children, was in danger of being hanged as a witch. It would probably have cost any person his life to question the existence of witches, or that these children were bewitched, and it was this state of feeling alone which sustained the delusion.

There can not be the slightest doubt that the delusion would have ceased the very moment that the children were punished instead of petted for their deception. But upon the capricious evidence of these bewitched children, persons were hanged. If the children declared that any person had bewitched them, or commenced screaming, or went into affected convulsions when any person came into their pres-

ence, pious clergymen and learned judges declared this sufficient evidence to sustain a conviction, and, consequently, the persons thus accused by the juvenile devils were forthwith executed as witches. A female of most undoubted piety, who had sense enough to become disgusted with the pulpit aberrations of minister Paris, and quietly retired from the church, was, for this reason, sent to prison as a witch. But we need not dwell upon the particulars of this terrible and irrational delusion. In a few short weeks it passed away; then came the retribution of the outraged community. Judge Sewall, who had sentenced the victims to death, stood up in church at Boston, on fast day, and asked forgiveness of God and the people. The Rev. Mr. Paris, although in deep shame and sorrow he confessed his errors, and earnestly sought to regain public confidence, was discharged from the ministry, and Cotton Mather was hooted at by the boys, and pelted with stones.

If any further evidence was required to prove the human origin of these popular delusions, it would certainly be furnished by the manner in which they adapt themselves to the state of public feeling which is prevailing at the time they exist. They invariably carry upon them the impress of their nativity. The old Puritans of New England believed in the power of the devil. They believed, practically, that all the evil existing in the world resulted from the power of the devil, and all the good resulted from the power of God. If we are to accept this as the order of things, and judge from the amount of good and evil existing in the world, his satanic majesty has it all quite his own way, and the Creator is ou of office. Hence we find that this delusion, developing itself in the midst of this popular belief, conforms itself entirely to it; and instead of attributing

the manifestations to the influence of the spirit of God, as did the Camisards and Jansenists, they attributed them directly to the power of their most potent ruler—the devil. There can be no doubt that these "afflicted" children had been frightened a thousand times with hideous stories about the "bad man," and particularly taught that witches were his special agents, and operated directly through his power.

It was the same with regard to the Ursulines of Loudun. The rigid austerities of convent life, with all its gloomy superstitions, very naturally led to the belief in the existence of a diabolical power. They, too, believed in the potent energies of the devil, and in their misdirected efforts to resist his influence, they waged a continual warfare against their own nature. How could it be otherwise, then, that when they were seized with convulsions and ecstasies, and surrounded by preternatural phenomena, that they should regard them as diabolical visitations?

But a purer religious belief prevailed among the Camisards and Jansenists. But although this sentiment was directed to the Supreme Ruler of the universe, instead of the prince of darkness, yet it was carried to that extreme which destroys the balance of human nature. They gave themselves up so exclusively and intensely to the practice of religious devotions, that a derangement of the natural faculties was the inevitable consequence; and hence followed the mysterious phenomena which led them into such miserable delusions. How indubitably does this establish the principles contended for in the last preceding essay? God, in his infinite wisdom, has precisely adapted the constitution of human nature to the condition of surrounding circumstances, and whenever man violates the provisions of this grand scheme by

running into excessive religiousness, he violates the will of his Creator, and destroys the equilibrium of his own nature. We can only offer acceptable service to God by yielding obedience to the established laws of his natural government; and, therefore, it is just as wrong to carry religion to excess as it is to indulge in any other viciousness, for excessive religiousness is one of the worst vices that ever cursed the human race. Where has there ever existed any true religion within the walls of a convent? Who that has eyes to look forth upon the glorious scenes of nature, and reason to comprehend the scheme of human happiness, can suppose that true religion can be enjoyed in the gloomy seclusion of the monastery?

All the delusions which we have noticed, the religious frenzy which, but a few years ago, prevailed in Kentucky, those of Sweden and Norway, some symptoms of which yet prevail, and many others which we might notice were it necessary, are all the effects of the same cause. Nature forbids man to divert his attention from all the other duties which God requires of him, and run into religious excesses, and, whenever he does this, she checks his reckless course by means of her fearful penalties. Whenever the spirit of true religion is crushed out by cold and blighting superstition and sinful religious austerities, whenever man is wandering far from the path of nature, he is seized with convulsions and ecstasies, or tormented by witches and devils. Behold in this the ever-watchful guidance of an overruling Providence. Whenever man would bring upon himself unsupportable misery, and rush to his own destruction by the violation of natural laws, he is frightened back into the paths of duty and the way of truth by the phantoms of his own imagination: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom

hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches."

Thus have we briefly noticed a few of the delusions which have distracted human beings in modern times, and the phenomena which have been attributed to supernatural agency. When we come to investigate these matters closely and unmask the delusion, we find we have been entirely unsuccessful in our efforts to capture a live ghost or devil. Howsoever much a pair of these might contribute to the treasures of natural science, or add to our collections of wild animals, our explorations into the regions of mystery have not yet enabled us to make the valuable contribution. As we have pursued them they have retreated back and back into their invisible abodes, and, although we have discovered huge tracks in the sands of time, and found ominous signs where they had been prowling about in human spheres, yet the veritable animal itself has invariably eluded our most earnest and careful searches. They have caused great agitations in the ocean of human life, they have mercilessly tormented helpless women and children, and they have laid in ambush, and suddenly made vigorous attacks upon grave and serious men, as they were making sturdy combat against sin and the devil; but always, when we think we are just about to seize the coveted prize, we find that it is not there.

But we must confess that, in our devil-hunt, we have learned something of the nature and habits of the animal. We have discovered that he is very cunning, and possessed of a sound discretion. He has invariably played his pranks and made his attacks upon persons who were not armed with the equipments of truth, and whose minds were just in

that state of feeling which would cause them to become his easy prey. Demonology furnishes us no instance in which these denizens of the unknown world have meddled in the slightest degree with any person of sound intelligence and true religion. But as the deep gloom of ignorance settled down upon the human race, their visits became more frequent, and the wonders they performed more startling. Oh, how they reveled and caroused upon this unfortunate earth of ours during the dark night of the middle ages. They held a kind of infernal *Sabbat*, which lasted for more than five hundred years. But when the first glimmerings of approaching day began to appear in the social horizon, and the sun of knowledge in the gray dawn of morning began to shed a few struggling beams of light upon the human race, how these devilish phantoms began to scamper back to their infernal dens, and, as this sun rose majestically into the firmament of science and learning, and man, guided by its refulgent light, began to see his way in all the walks of life, then witches, and sorcerers, and all the hosts of supernatural phantoms began to lose their diabolical potency, and have, we trust, all taken their final exit from human spheres, except a few rapping devils, and we hope we shall soon be able to furnish them with an outfit and a passport for their safe return to the kingdom of his satanic majesty. Somehow or other it has always happened that these stray devils have always come "bobbing around" just at the very time when outraged nature would no longer submit to the gross violations which were being perpetrated against her, and ignorant and deluded persons have attributed the fearful penalties which she administered to the intervention of supernatural agency.

But what is the essential difference between the

old superannuated delusions which we have just examined, and this new-born humbug, which is just now performing such startling wonders under the auspices of the rapping spirits. What new supernatural visitors are these, which, disclaiming all allegiance with the devil, and being independent of the laws of God, announce themselves to us as the departed spirits of dead men, and which find devoted believers even in this age of learning and among persons of considerable intelligence? Our acquaintance with them is rather limited, as it has been but a short time since they condescended to be on visiting terms with us mortal beings, and during this time, although they have manifested their presence among us in a very familiar manner, and pryed rather closely into other people's business, yet, as far as regards their individual selves, they have not manifested any very remarkable social qualities.

By means of their earthly mediums they can prattle about subjects of the greatest difficulty and obscurity in regard to the affairs of mortal beings, but as to what they are themselves, whence they came, or whither they go, they obstinately persist in maintaining the most perplexing silence. We think this is very ungentlemanly in them, at least, for they find out all our secrets, and will not tell us any of theirs. They can tell us all about the little unimportant affairs of our own spheres, with the greatest ease, but they can not give us the slightest intelligence as to the nature of the spheres which they themselves inhabit. They know all about our world, but nothing about their own.

Now, here is proof absolutely conclusive, that all these phenomena originate in the human mind, or result from the operation of its faculties. We find that these pretended spirits are very familiar with

all the affairs of this world, with which they, as departed spirits, can have no reasonable opportunities to become conversant, while, on the other hand, they are perfectly ignorant of all the affairs and circumstances which exist in the world in which they pretend to dwell. Now, the information which is furnished by these spiritual manifestations, is precisely such as comes within the province of human knowledge, and whenever the information desired is beyond the limits of this province, these pretended spirits can no more furnish it than mortal beings. It is of very little importance to man to have the spiritual intelligences indicate to him certain names or numbers always known to some of the company present, but it would be of the utmost importance to him, if they would furnish him with reliable information, as to the nature and condition of things as they exist in the future world, of which they pretend to be the denizens. But no such information in any reliable shape is pretended to be given, and, therefore, as the information given is entirely human in its character, it is certain that there is no spiritual or superhuman intelligence employed in imparting it, but its character clearly indicates that it is molded in the human mind.

But what are the phenomena? It is supposed that they are so familiar to every reader, that minute detail in this place would be superfluous. It is well known that by forming a circle round a table in the proper manner, raps are produced, numbers are indicated, words are spelled out, and in this manner information is imparted, which for all that persons ignorant of the true cause can see, is not produced by human power, and, therefore, they believe it must be produced by supernatural power, and as they can not think of any thing that is more likely to be en-

gaged in such business, they have attributed all these manifestations to the intermeddling in human affairs of the spirits of deceased human beings. Now, we are ready to admit that these phenomena are produced. But let it be distinctly understood, that we do not assert that all the pretended manifestations of spiritualism are real phenomena, for we are well aware that many of them are produced by fraud; but at the same time an investigation of this subject has convinced us that phenomena of this character may be produced without resorting to fraud.

The whole subject seems so thoroughly ridiculous to educated and reflecting minds, that it has almost entirely escaped scientific scrutiny, and while it was thus left undisturbed, it was actively engaged in fortifying itself in the public mind. It must be confessed that this delusion came before the public, armed with very dangerous powers, and while these powers were not comprehended, as they could not be by the masses of the people, it possessed all the qualities which were requisite to insure it a wide-spread success. When it came before the people with its mysterious rapping, elevating tables, and tilting pianos, without the employment of any visible physical force, it was calculated to have a decided effect upon very serious minds, and while it could not be accounted for upon natural principles, and the operation of no human power could be detected, it seemed as though we were obliged to adopt the last and only theory by which it could be accounted for, that of the intervention of supernatural agency. Those who could not laugh at it were very apt to become proselytes to the new doctrine. But, notwithstanding the laughing; the rapping and tilting still went on. The phenomena gave very strange evidence that they were spiritual manifestations, and the advocates of the new

doctrine pushed their opponents upon the very uncomfortable dilemma, that they must either explain their natural or human origin, or admit their spirituality.

By means of these arguments, sustained by the powerful aid of the phenomena, no satisfactory physical cause of which could be assigned, the delusion has rapidly spread. Perhaps no one delusion has ever before so widely prevailed. It has its confident believers in almost every country upon the globe. In our own country it has spread throughout its length and breadth. Here it is sustained by upward of one hundred published works, consisting of books and pamphlets, and also by twelve weekly journals and four monthly magazines, all devoted exclusively to the dissemination and establishment of the so-called spiritual philosophy. Thus it stands forth the monster delusion of the nineteenth century.

The only attempt which has been made in the United States to rebuke this delusion, was made by denying the integrity of the facts upon which it is founded, and charging that all its phenomena are produced by fraud. This was occasioned by an offer of five hundred dollars made by the proprietors of the Boston Courier, to be paid to any person or persons who should produce the phenomena before a committee of learned gentlemen, named by them, without employing physical force or fraud. This led to the Cambridge investigation. But such investigations can never explode the delusion of Modern Spiritualism. If they have discovered that similar phenomena are sometimes produced by fraud, this does not account for the real phenomena, in the production of which no fraud can be detected simply, because none is used. The spiritualist failed to produce the phenomena before the investigating committee, for

reasons which we shall hereafter explain. The natural law which governs their production was violated, and, consequently, failure was inevitable. But, because they were not produced before the committee where the necessary conditions were not complied with, it does not follow that all the phenomena which are produced, when they are complied with, are produced by fraud. Yet, notwithstanding, the spirits obstinately refused to display their power before the Cambridge investigators, they are by no means backward in manifesting themselves upon other occasions. But why is this? We shall see; and in the course of the investigation, the natural cause which produces them will be explained.

Count de Gasparin has more thoroughly investigated the subject of table-rapping and tilting than any other person whose experiments are recorded. But let it not be supposed that his experiments stand unsustained, for other scientific men, in various parts of Europe, have made the same experiments, and obtained the same results. His object was to produce the phenomena upon which spiritualism is founded without the exertion of any known physical force, or by invoking the aid of supernatural agency. He proceeded in the same manner that the spiritualists proceed, when they design to invoke the presence of departed spirits. He formed a circle of experiments around a table, and, after a few unsuccessful trials, raps were produced. As the experiments progressed, the raps reproduced numbers; that is, one of the persons forming the circle would have a certain number in his mind, and then mentally command the table to indicate this number, which would be done by rapping out a certain number of raps without the employment of any visible physical force. But here we must note an important fact. Two persons sitting on op-

posite sides of the table were directed to each think of a number (the number was known to no one but the person in whose mind it was formed) and mentally command the table to produce the numbers at the same time. What was the result? Why, the number of the most powerful operator, or as the spiritualists would term it, "medium," that is the person with the strongest will, was invariably produced.

Whether his number was the highest or the lowest, the table would obey him. If his number were the highest, it was noticed that the raps were not so strong after they passed the number of the less powerful operator, for then the wills ceased to operate together, and commenced a struggle against each other, but still the raps continued, until the higher number was indicated. If the number of the strongest operator was the lowest, the raps refused to continue after it was indicated. The strongest will invariably prevailed. Let this fact be particularly noted, for, with it we shall have no difficulty in understanding why the spiritualist could not produce the phenomena before the Cambridge investigators. True, raps were produced at the commencement of this investigation, but they even failed to produce these toward its close, which fact still further strengthens the theory, we are attempting to establish.

But, let us return to the experiments. Names were written upon pieces of paper, which were carefully folded, and the names were spelled out by means of the raps. Let us here note another characteristic feature. Neither names nor numbers can be rapped out, without they are present in the mind of some one or more of the persons, who are disposing of the natural force which produces the phenomenon. If the name or number is suggested in the mind of any one of the experimenters it may easily

be rapped out. But let it be proposed that the raps spell out a certain name or sentence which can not possibly be in the mind of any person present, and see then if the spirits will exercise their mystic power. For instance, take up a book, and demand that a certain line on a certain page which you name, without knowing yourself or permitting others to know what is contained in that line, and then see if it will be rapped out correctly. Such a thing never has been or never will be done. Hence whatever the mysterious agency is which produces this phenomenon, it is disposed of by the human mind or will.

But to proceed with the experiments. The next object was to produce elevations and revolutions. It must here be remarked that the experimenters acquired skill in these operations by practice and study, just as in any other human business or profession. Hence, as they advanced with the experiments, they gained more complete control over the table, and phenomena, which they could not possibly produce at their commencement, were produced with the greatest ease before the close. They were continued during five months. Accordingly, after they had made sufficient progress, elevations and revolutions were easily produced, and they then proceeded to achieve the grand result of all their efforts. This was to produce elevation without contact. This was accomplished in a feeble manner at first, but as they acquired the art, they also acquired the power over the table, until finally it was elevated with heavy weights upon it, without the application of any known physical power. The circle was formed by forming a united chain of hands directly above the edge of the table, and each person exerted the whole power of his will to cause that portion of the table directly under his hand to rise. Thus was produced, without the aid of any

spiritual influence, all the material phenomena upon which the spiritualistic theory is founded.*

It will undoubtedly seem strange that persons can produce these raps, and move a table loaded with weight without the application of any visible human power. It is so contrary to the common experience of life, that we are apt to discard the idea without a moment's consideration. But if we can not successfully deny the existence of the phenomena, how are we to dispose of the fact. Undoubtedly, if they exist, they are the legitimate effects of a cause, and if the known elements of science fail to explain this cause, it is surely our duty, in forming our belief, to adopt as true those views which are sanctioned by the dictates of enlightened reason, and founded upon the most reliable facts which we possess.

But it is asserted by leading scientific men, that these facts do not exist, and all these pretended phenomena are produced by fraud. Let us examine this hypothesis of fraud; and, first, in regard to the experiments of Count de Gasparin, which have been briefly noticed. Here it is necessary that the Count must either be charged with being guilty of wilful falsehood, in asserting that phenomena were produced which he knew were not, or these phenomena being produced as he has recorded them, were produced by fraud. The first of these charges is wholly untenable. The character of the Count, as to integrity and veracity, is entirely irreproachable, so much so that the most bitter of his opponents do not attempt to overthrow his theory by assailing it at this point. The record must, therefore, be received as authentic. The question of his being deceived is merged in the

* For a full account of these experiments, see Count De Gasparin's Treatise on Table-Tilting and the False Supernatural, published by Kiggins & Kellogg, N. Y.

question of fraud, for he could not be deceived except by the secret fraud of his coöperators.

Now as to the fraud. He was assisted in these experiments by persons, male and female, of known integrity, who were not believers in spiritualism, and had no other object in view but that of eliciting truth. True, they felt a deep interest in the success of the experiments, but, as they had no other object in view but to ascertain the truth, could that object be attained or promoted by achieving an apparent success by means of fraud. This would only be perpetrating a fraud against themselves, which is by no means a supposable case. Again: in order to sustain the supposition of fraud, it will be necessary to establish the charge of dishonesty against the whole company; for, while they were employed for one purpose, they have dishonestly used all their efforts to accomplish an other, that is, to establish error instead of truth. It is not at all reasonable to suppose that persons of high character, without any inducement whatever, would direct all their efforts to defeat the very purpose which they so much desired to accomplish. Yet, again, even supposing that there were those in the company who were such unaccountable dunces as to act dishonestly when there was no reward offered for their villainy, how could their attempts at fraud escape the close observation of the Count, whose integrity is an established fact? and it is also entirely allowable, that there were at least three or four honest ones in a company of a dozen selected persons, and that these were paying strict attention to the progress of the experiments. It is quite impossible that, in the most supposable case, undetected fraud could have been practiced; and especially is this so when we consider the simple means used, that of a plain table with three legs, and

always used in broad daylight. We are, therefore, forced to adopt the conclusion that these phenomena were produced in the manner described.

Now, if these phenomena were thus produced in Europe, they may be produced in the same way in America. Precisely the same principles of nature which prevail there, also prevail here. Accordingly, we see that the spiritualists here, when they produce these phenomena, are obliged to comply with precisely the same conditions which the Count did there, and whenever they strictly do this the phenomena are invariably produced, and whenever they do not, they invariably fail. Thus these facts prove each other. We know that these phenomena may be produced, in America, because they were produced in Europe, and we know that they could be produced in Europe because they are every day produced in America.

It seems that this should dispose of the question of fraud; but let us look to the foundation upon which this hypothesis stands in the United States. It stands upon the foundation that all the spiritualists are not only dishonest but willful deceivers. How is it possible to suppose that any system of fraud could be so universally practiced, and yet remain undetected by the very persons who practice it. If they practice it knowingly, they are dishonest. But it will be said that the mediums only practice the fraud, and the others are honestly deceived by it. Now, if this be true, this fraud must be reduced to some definite system. It is utterly impossible that these raps and table elevations could be produced without the application of any visible human power, in very many different ways, or that each of the mediums in the United States invents his or her own system of fraud, and that this is so ingeniously

concealed that it remains beyond the reach of human scrutiny. There must necessarily be concert of action among them, and the fraudulent means by which these phenomena are produced must be reduced to a definite and single system, for they all operate in the same way, and produce the same effects. Hence, in order to become a medium, it would be necessary to be initiated into the mysteries of this dishonest gang of deceivers, and mediums can be made only by explaining to the new operator the manner in which this fraud is practiced.

But it is well known by every person who has been a careful observer of spiritualism, that this is certainly untrue. We have seen persons affected with this influence who were not believers in spiritualism, and who steadily strived against it, and who therefore would be the last ones to whom this unfathomable secret would be confided. We have seen persons become mediums whose sincerity and integrity are beyond all question. But why is this? It is because the delusion has assumed an epidemical character. Mental disease is frequently contagious as well as physical disease. This is settled beyond all question. All the great delusions which have distracted the human race have prevailed as epidemics. The Camisard, Jansenist, Loudun, and Salem delusions were all eminently so. The phenomena in each of these delusions were at first manifested by a very few persons, but the contagion spread until it numbered its victims by hundreds and thousands. This is the result of the natural sympathy which exists between congenial minds. All minds that are in the proper condition to contract the disease, are quite sure to take it when they are brought under the influence of the mental contagion, just as persons whose physical systems are in a certain condition,

contract disease when brought under the influence of physical contagion. It is in accordance with these principles, that when the delusion of spiritualism is prevailing very intensely in a community, it assumes an epidemical character. We have had numerous instances in this country of this contagion sweeping whole neighborhoods, almost every person in it being affected by strange and involuntary motions and jerkings, and making many demoniac demonstrations under its influence. Hence, we perceive the great similarity which exists between this delusion and the others which we have noticed. In those the victims had convulsions and ecstacies, and in the midst of their deliriums spoke words of inspiration; in this they frequently have a kind of dance, and make involuntary motions with the head and limbs, have trances, and receive inspiration directly from the spirit-world.

Hence we see that these phenomena are produced in cases to which the hypothesis of fraud is utterly inapplicable. But let us view it in still another light. Suppose we admit that the above argument is unsound, and that there is no certain fixed system of fraud by which the mediums, one and all, operate. What then? Why, in this case, if these manifestations are produced by fraud, of course each medium has to resort to his or her own ingenuity to invent the means by which they are produced. How, then, does it happen, that the most innocent and harmless girls, those who are most untutored in the cunning devices of men, very frequently become the most powerful mediums. We fear not to venture the assertion, that human ingenuity is incapable of inventing a scheme of fraud which can be carried into such extensive practice, even though it were intrusted to none but the most skillful operators, and

be subjected to the severe scrutiny which spiritualism has undergone, and yet the fraudulent means remain undetected. And, yet it must be supposed that these unlearned, unsophisticated girls, who have never been beyond the limits of their own neighborhood, and who never heard of the deceiving tricks used by rogues and wizards, girls with hearts as pure as ever fell to the lot of virtuous woman, and desires and intentions as sincere as ever urged a human being to a good act, girls such as these, utterly incapable of acting such a part, if they would, must not only successfully practice a scheme of fraud which puzzles the sharpest human sagacity, but they must also, individually, invent the means by which it is practiced. Surely, those who attempt to explain these mysterious phenomena by asserting that they are produced by fraud, have never beheld them as they are manifested in the country, among the virtuous and truly sincere, but unlearned classes.

Whether we suppose these phenomena are produced by a fixed system of fraud, by which all the mediums operate, or that each medium resorts to his or her own mode of producing them, both are alike ridiculous. How can it be supposed, that if they were produced by fraud, the fraudulent means could for a single day remain undetected? Why, the fearful secret is intrusted to boys and girls, men, women and children. Mediums flood every portion of the country, and they generally consist of the most unlearned and unskillful portion of the community. Will it be said that if we call upon any of this motley crew to practice before our eyes a system of fraud which is entirely free from any visible means of concealment, that they can do it in such an adroit manner that we can not discover the fraudulent

means? If spiritualism rested upon such a system of fraud, the practice of which would necessarily require such consummate skill and adroitness, while its manifestations are intrusted to so many bungling operators as it is, it would be exposed more than a hundred times in less than twenty-four hours. What! a mere illiterate, unskilled country girl can practice a system of legerdemain before us without any training in the art, so perfectly that the best of us can not discover the mode in which it is done? Truly it seems nonsense to refute such an idea, yet it is the avowed belief of some of the most scientific men in our country. They have detected a few instances of fraud, and been present at a few sittings where the phenomena could not be produced, because the necessary conditions were not complied with, and therefore they conclude that these phenomena can not be produced unless by fraud.

We do not deny that there are many instances in which raps and table tilting are effected by fraud, but this we confidently assert, that while the experiments are confined to naked tables, and the operator consists of a very awkward, bungling person, who happens to become a medium, the fraud can be detected in every instance by any thing like common observation. It is no part of our purpose to account for these fraudulent phenomena. We throw them entirely out of the argument as unworthy of consideration, and shall be well contented if we succeed in satisfactorily explaining those in the production of which no fraud can be detected. Those who assert that none such in reality exist, certainly have never seen spiritualism in its prosperity, as it exists in many parts of the country, where all the essential conditions are properly complied with, and phenom-

ena are readily produced which seems to be shrouded in impenetrable mystery, and calculated to astound the minds of well-disposed and sincere persons.

The points in the argument that the phenomena do exist, and that they are not produced by fraud, are now sufficiently established. We have next to decide the question of their spirituality. The absurdity of such a belief has already been demonstrated in this argument, but as this is the important point, let us offer a few more thoughts upon the subject. Throwing aside the evidence already offered, is it not more reasonable to suppose that these phenomena are produced by some innate power which resides in the human organization, and is effectually disposed of under certain conditions, than to suppose it is the effect of some supernatural agency. Why, the only argument it has in favor of its supernaturalism, is, that it is a little out of the regular course of common experience. The argument is just this, that persons ignorant of nature can not understand how these phenomena can be the effect of a natural cause, therefore they are the effects of a supernatural cause, and it just amounts to this, that all the phenomena that man can not understand are not the effects of natural causes, because he can not understand it so, and all the phenomena which appears mysterious to him are produced by ghosts, departed spirits, or some other rambling, supernatural phantoms, and when fully developed the argument amounts to this: there was a time when man was entirely ignorant of the causes of all the phenomena manifested in nature, therefore, all that time all natural phenomena was produced by spirits and goblins. Hence man's belief in the false supernatural being the consequence of his ignorance; as before remarked, this belief

has prevailed just in proportion with his ignorance. When ignorance universally prevailed, this belief also universally prevailed. Hence the folly of attributing to supernatural causes those phenomena of which, through our own ignorance, we can not comprehend the natural causes. It is precisely this disposition in man which has led him into the grossest errors that have ever disgraced human rationality.

We will be guilty of offering but one more refutation to the absurd idea of the spirituality of these phenomena. According to the creed of spiritualism, the soul and body are separated at death, and while the physical or material part of man is returned to its mother dust, the spirit, or immaterial principle of humanity, is "born in the spirit-world." Now, this state of perfect spirituality of course precludes all idea of materiality. The soul, or spirit, in that state, is entirely disconnected from all material substance. This is very good doctrine, but it is entirely fatal to the theory of modern spiritualism.

Now, if the soul or spirit is immaterial, we will just ask them to explain how an immaterial substance can produce material phenomena. No one will deny that table-rapping and tilting are entirely material phenomena. They may say that in our present state of being, we can not fully comprehend the nature and power of departed spirits; but they tell us that the spirit is an immaterial substance, and this proposition is quite intelligible. There is no psychological mystery about it. Having told us this, we just want to know one thing more, and that is, how a spiritual or immaterial substance can knock upon a table, or exert the physical force which is absolutely necessary to produce these material phenomena. It is the founding principle of their theory that there is no physical or natural force or substance

employed in producing this knocking and moving, but that it is exclusively the work of the spirits. The idea is supremely ridiculous; and having set these antagonisms against each other, we leave them to destroy themselves.

But, in all the wide circle of human error, what can be more grossly ridiculous, or more destitute of every vestige of reason and common sense, than the idea that the spirits of dead men, which have winged their eternal flight from earthly spheres, can be induced to return to earth again and perform physical deeds simply by a number of persons forming a chain of hands around a wooden table. Persons join their hands together, and immediately communication is opened up with the spirit-world. The spirits of our great men, who were so busily engaged in good works while on earth, seem to be entirely idle there, and have nothing else to do but to attend the commands of these persons, and answer their silly questions, and the spirits of men who were distinguished on earth for their genius and learning, seem to have been entirely divested of common sense by assuming the spiritual nature, and frequently return answers which could only originate in the mind of a vulgar fool. Those immortal bards, whose human poetry will stand a living beauty through all the ages of time, send back to us the most vulgar doggerel, as the result of their spiritual efforts; and men whose words will always charm the human mind, send us back communications in nonsensical and ungrammatical sentences. But form the chain of hands, and immediately the spirit world is aroused. It requires but a moment to send a communication to the spirit world, and not merely get a reply, but have any desired spirit transported back to earth, and performing all kinds of physical feats with the furniture

of the room. It does seem to us the strangest of all the features which have been developed in human nature, that intelligent rational beings can be deluded by such miserable phantoms. How can persons who believe there is a word of truth in the Bible, believe doctrines which so completely defeat its letter and spirit? How can persons who believe in one Omnipotent Supreme being, adopt opinions which, if they were true, would contravene the most obvious principles of His natural government? They desert all the realities of the world to follow a mysterious phantom, and believe it to be a supernatural existence merely because they can not see how it can be a terrestrial animal.

But as these phenomena exist, and are not produced either by fraud or spiritual intercourse, we now come to the important consideration of how they are produced, and this will close the argument. We have seen that, by forming a circle in the proper manner, raps may be produced and a table moved without the application of any visible physical force. Inertion is the natural condition of all material bodies, and we can not conceive of motion without the exertion of force. It is because this idea is immovably fixed in the human mind, and we form all our belief and opinions in accordance with it, that the spiritualists have been led to attribute to supernatural agency the force which produces the mysterious motion under consideration. Force is either physical or supernatural. Physical force is that which is produced by the operation of natural causes; supernatural force is the exertion of some power which does not result from the operation of a natural cause. The one results from the operations of the laws by which God governs the natural universe, the other is the direct interposition of the power of God. We

acknowledge no supernatural existence which exerts any control over the affairs of this world except God alone.

As all motion is produced by the exertion of force, and as the spiritualists have observed a motion which is produced by no known physical force, they conclude that it must be produced by supernatural force. But this results entirely from the ignorance of man in regard to the subject of natural forces. We have already shown that the distinctive characteristics of these phenomena, prove that they can not be the effects of supernatural causes; we are, therefore, necessarily driven back to search among physical forces for their true causes, and if they can not be found there, man must, for the present, at least, confess the inefficiency of his knowledge to solve the mystery. But the experiments which have been made, and the progress of spiritualism itself, have fortunately enabled us to discover the existence of a physical force before unknown. This force Gasparin has termed the Fluid Action, but from its peculiar character, and for the want of a scientific technicality, we prefer to call it the Magnetic Force. The experiments have established that this force is innate in the human organism, and that when a number of persons form a continuous chain by connecting their hands together, this magnetic force flows through the whole circle, and may be controlled by the person in the circle who possesses the magnetic influence in the strongest degree.

Although licensed science refuses to admit the existence of this force, yet, every candid person who reflects upon things as they are actually displayed before him, and who seeks to shape his belief by the most reliable evidence he can obtain, must admit the existence of this law of nature, for, as these pheno-

mena exist, if they can not be satisfactorily explained by the operation of some such physical force, we must admit the truth of doctrines which no true christian can entertain, and which conflict with all the established principles of nature which are known to man. But what is there so unreasonable about this principle of nature, that men of science should regard it with so much suspicion? Its operation is not more mysterious than that of any other natural law. All final causes are incomprehensible to the human mind. Why do these ponderous globes whirl through illimitable space, and each one perform its established revolution. Men of science tell us that it is because of the law of gravity; but we all know that, and further than that, human intellect can not delve into the mystery. If, then, we are asked what it is that produces these rapping phenomena, we answer, that it is the operation of a natural principle; but if we are asked why these effects result, we will answer when we are told why the sun attracts the earth. The experiments and investigations which establish the existence of this natural principle, so far as they have progressed, are as conclusive as those which establish the principle of gravitation. Hence it is just as reasonable that this law should exist as any other natural law. It has the same cause with all natural laws; the great First Cause, which can not possibly be comprehended by human intellect.

But the most singular characteristic of this magnetic force is, that it is disposed of by the human will, and it is this peculiar trait alone which has induced man to attribute its manifestations to supernatural force. When persons have beheld their own secret thoughts reproduced by this mysterious agency, the inducements to look beyond the sphere of nature

for the cause, is quite irresistible. But it has been shown, when reviewing the experiments, that all this can readily be done in defiance of the spirits. We asked the reader to particularly note, that some persons possessed this power in a much stronger degree than others, that these phenomena could in no case be produced, unless there was a strenuous exertion of the will, and that the will of the most powerful operator or medium, invariably prevailed. We can now explain why it was that the phenomena were not produced before the Cambridge investigators. The investigators were intensely prejudiced against spiritualism, and they exerted the utmost power of their wills to prevent the production of the phenomena, and as they were all men of extraordinary mental powers, the consequent failure was in complete accordance with the principles we have explained. There were but two or three professed spiritual mediums present, and very few spiritualists, and all these were persons whose mental powers were infinitely inferior to those who opposed them.

Had the spiritualists, under these circumstances, been as successful as usual in producing the phenomena, it would have shown at once, that there is no reliance to be placed in the theory of the magnetic force, but their almost entire failure adds more conclusive evidence to the truth of its existence. Indeed, leading spiritualists have repeatedly admitted, that they could not produce this phenomena against a strong battery of opposing wills. They have too frequently seen the fact demonstrated that the spirits obstinately refuse to quit their mystic spheres to manifest their presence among mortals, where the odds is too much in favor of the unbelievers. But, because the phenomena were not produced in this single instance, as under the circumstances it was

impossible they could, the literati conclude, that the delusion of spiritualism is founded upon a system of fraud, and that these phenomena can not be produced by natural causes. We are entirely confident that were all the necessary conditions properly complied with, and although these same professors were present, and keeping a sharp look out for fraud, but exerting their minds to produce the phenomena instead of striving to prevent their production, the phenomena will be produced in every instance, and again, we are confident that where there is such a battery of opposing minds as there was at the Cambridge investigation, with no more power to produce the magnetic force upon the affirmative side than there was there, the opposing side will invariably prevail, and the phenomena can not be produced with energy in a single instance.

Such is the law of the magnetic force upon which is based the delusion of modern spiritualism. The discovery of this natural law is yet in its infancy, and its investigation has just commenced. But science, both in Europe and America, is retarding instead of aiding this investigation. It will neither admit its existence nor investigate. It has prejudged the case, and refuses it an impartial hearing. Are those men who are armed and equipped with the weapons of science for the express purpose of carrying its conquests into the regions of unknown principles, discharging their duty while they are only occupying their old fortified camps, without making an effort to advance into the country of the enemy? The science of the present day stands amazed and powerless in the presence of these newly developed phenomena, and because they will not conform to the principles which it has licensed as true, it assumes a sullen dignity, and regards them with contempt, because it

is beyond its power to explain them. This totally defeats the true aim of science. It is not the duty of nature to adapt itself to science, but it is the province and design of science to adapt itself to, and explain the principles of nature. If men of science would earnestly seek to discover the principles of nature in regard to these phenomena, this monstrous delusion, which is rapidly spreading itself and extending to all classes of community, would soon be completely exploded, and numbers of our sincere and useful citizens, diverted from the ways of error and directed into the paths of truth. Until science does this it is a traitor to the cause of truth.

We have now examined all the mysteries which properly belong to spiritualism. We trust its advocates will excuse us if we decline to investigate what they choose to denominate its higher circles, for the very sufficient reason that they have no legitimate connection whatever with spiritualism. Speaking and healing mediums, trance-speaking, impenetration of thought, somnambulism, and clairvoyance were all produced by animal magnetism, just as perfectly as they are now reproduced by pretended spiritual intercourse, more than fifty years before ever a rapping spirit was heard of. They are the same phenomena without any material variation. We shall, therefore, without ceremony, just return this stolen property to its rightful owners. There are very strange and mysterious phenomena connected with this subject which we might explain were it to our present purpose, but we shall not write a treatise upon animal magnetism while we are treating of modern spiritualism.

Mesmer produced all these phenomena in the latter part of the eighteenth century just as perfectly, without any pretension to supernatural aid, as the

spiritualists produce them to-day. Persons now become somnambulists and clairvoyants in the same manner that they did then, and the same phenomena, such as trance-speaking, increased power of thought, and impenetration of thought, which were the effects of animal magnetism in 1780, become the results of spiritual intercourse in 1858. All this immense fabric of delusion is built upon the narrow foundation of table rapping and tilting, and the only excuse the spiritualists can have for "stealing the thunder" of animal magnetism, is because of its strangeness and the peculiar qualities which it possesses for astounding and confusing the public mind. Many honest and capable minds have thus been led astray, the peace of many happy families destroyed, and the brightest prospects of life have vanished before the moral vampire, and hopeless insanity has frequently been the result. It is the duty of every man of science, of every christian and philanthropist, to unite their efforts to roll back the tide of this popular delusion. Let us come into a closer communion with God, and learn his will by ascertaining the laws which he has established for the government of man, and if we obey these laws, we will never be driven upon the shoals of error by those phenomena which always appear in some mysterious shape when man is departing far from the paths of truth. As surely as God is a beneficent being, if man will but learn the laws which govern human existence, and let their conditions be his rule of action, he will never be distracted and distressed by such delusions as Jansenism, witchcraft, or spiritualism, henceforth for ever.

FINIS.

dc
X42384